

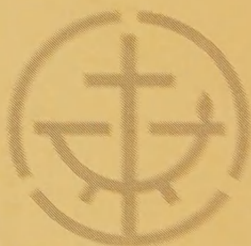
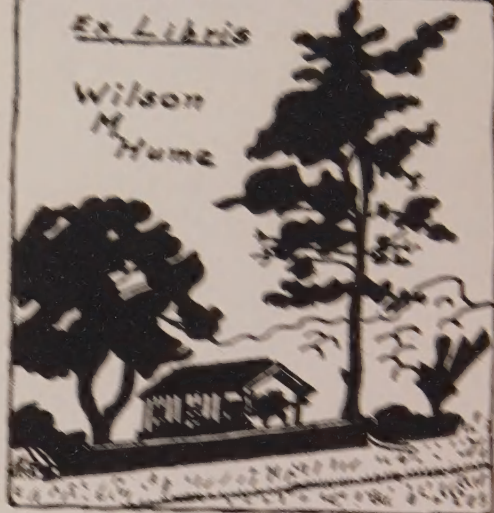
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THE
AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT

Fazal Karim BY
F. K. KHAN DURRANI,

Muslim Missionary, Berlin, Germany.

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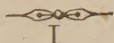
FOREWORD.

The subject-matter of the following pages appeared originally in the *Moslemische Revue* (Berlin). It is now presented to the English-reading public. Chapter VII has been re-written to suit the change of readers.

Friends at Lahore have drawn my attention to my criticism of Maulana Azad's style of writing in Ch. VI, which they say is too severe. It is a misfortune that in India no distinction is made between a person's work and his personality, and almost everything there gets drawn into the whirl of religious controversy. I have only to plead that my criticism concerns only his style of writing and in no way extends to his personality, for which there could be absolutely no occasion.

Suggestions are sometimes made that the Ahmadis of the Lahore section ought to give up calling themselves Ahmadis, and then other Muslims will be coming forward to co-operate with them. If the choice were offered to me personally, I would unhesitatingly refuse it. For people who can be held back by a word from a cause with which they otherwise agree are not worth it, and their objection is very often an excuse for not doing anything. When names like Chishti, Naqshbandi, Qadri, Hanbali and heaven knows how many besides are all tolerated, it is not clear why there should be any particular objection to the name Ahmadi, which after all is after the name of the Holy Prophet and defines the characteristics of the movement so well. Besides, the name has a historic significance and possesses a psychological value, and if the name and the character of the organisation are changed in order to please these objectors where is the guarantee that we shall even then obtain the co-operation and that they shall not have some more excuses? For there is no end of excuses for those who do not want to do anything.

THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT



GENERAL REMARKS.

The Ahmadiyya Movement has one and only one purpose in view: the propagation of Islam and its defence against the attacks of other faiths. It is established in the spirit and under the sanction of the Holy Qur'an contained in the injunction: "And from among you there should be a party who invite to good and enjoin what is right and forbid the wrong"—(III, 103). This is our only article of association, Ahmadi-ism is neither a religion nor a sect within a religion, and the phrase "Preaching Ahmadi-ism" can have no meaning whatever unless it be the inviting of other brother Muslims to rise to the necessity of propagating Islam. Indeed, apart from the preaching of Islam, there is no Ahmadi-ism. The two things, as understood by us, are convertible terms. In pursuance of this aim, far from preaching "Ahmadi-ism", we do not even care to mention it. Our chief aim is to present Muhammad and Islam and not a particular reformer or school of thought in Islam.

The Ahmadiyya Movement is not a new thing, and its existence should not be a matter of surprise to those who have any acquaintance with the history of the intellectual and spiritual movements in Islam. Islam is a living faith and as proof of its abiding life and inner vigour, it brings forth from its bosom, every now and then, men to whom Communion with God is no mere figure of speech but a reality, men who have lived the faith, who have passed through the fire and come out as burnished gold, whose entire beings have become saturated through and through with Truth—men who, moved by Truth alone, speak with the authority and power of the prophets of old. Islam had built no church. It had established no agency to enforce its teachings and compel the people to conform to the morals it had taught.

Whereas Christian Europe had had its moral and religious life regulated by Churches and priests, who ruled the people by keeping them in ignorance and by encouraging superstition, Islam had left the individual free. "There is no compulsion in religion," says the Holy Qu'ran (2:256). There are no Thou-shalt and Thou-shalt-nots in Islam. Its strength lies in its human appeal, in its appeal to the intellect of man. The Qu'ran shows the way, argues with him and invites him to search and think for himself, and then leaves the individual alone. It is this freedom of the individual in matters of faith and practice, it is the practical, human, rational and profoundly spiritual and elevating character of the faith itself, that have together combined to bring forth those master minds who have ever and anon given new directions to the spiritual life of the Muslim peoples and left their mark on history.

Times change and we with time. Our ways of thought change. Idioms that were once pregnant with meaning, die out and give place to new ones. Metaphors and similes that once thrilled and charmed the imagination become meaningless. Our very languages change out of all recognition. No doubt,—and this is one of its distinctive characteristics—the Holy Qu'ran is composed in a language and in a manner that it holds its appeal to all ages. But there is no language that can express the Truth and lay it bare in all its beauty. Truth requires to be discovered ever anew and to be lived over and over again. Stevenson says in one of his essays, it requires two to speak the truth, one to speak and the other to understand. The Qur'an is a glorious book, but unless our hearts are attuned to feel and respond to its appeal, unless our own moral and spiritual development is such that we are enabled thereby to understand and grasp the message it holds, unless we are

able to know and recognise the truth when we are face to face with it,—unless this is so, the Holy Qur'an with all its wondrous eloquence and clarity will remain a sealed book to us. In order, then, that a religion may be able to live, it is necessary that its message should be discovered ever anew and the truth it holds be lived over and over again. And the proof of its being alive consists in this that it should bring out those, who are destined to make these discoveries, from its own body.

And Islam has given proof of this life, this ever-renewing inner vigour, more often than I need tell. Says the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him!) "God will raise among this people (*i. e.* the Muslims) at the head of every century one who will renew for them their faith." These are the Reformers in Islam, the Mahdis, the Mujaddids. The ignorant say, Islam is rigid, that it has no power of adaptation to the change of times and conditions. How little they know of the virility and vitality of Islam! Certainly, there is nothing in Islam that needs revision or purification. The truths of Islam are eternal verities that are above the conditions of age or clime. As the laws of nature are above time, so are the truths of Islam. How can you change Islam, when the highest ideal it puts before its followers is nothing but conformation and keeping true to nature? Says the Holy Qur'an: "And set thy face upright for religion in the right manner—the nature made by Allah in which He has made men; there is no altering of Allah's creation: that is the right religion" (XXX, 30). The only modernisation that is possible or practicable or even profitable, is that these truths should be interpreted in conformity with the changed conditions and times. Or more correctly, they need to be translated in the language

and modes of thought and expression obtaining in a particular period of time. This interpretation and translation cannot be left in the hands of every Tom, Dick and Harry. No doubt, scholars and philosophers serve their purpose, and the Holy Prophet had truly said, "The learned among my people are like the prophets of Israel." But the fittest persons for this work of interpretation and rejuvenation are the divinely appointed Reformers (*Mujaddidin, Muhaddasin*). For, they do not borrow their light from intellect alone. Their human understandings are also aided by revelation and direct Communion with God, Who is the source of all true light.

It is not merely the change of times and conditions that renders this re-interpretation necessary. If we were all equally gifted with spiritual insight and equally capable of moral and spiritual development, so that we could equally appreciate religious truth, such Reformers would not be needed. But human beings are not so constituted. The passage of time dulls our memory, and the message that once throbbed with life as it came from the lips of the Master, degenerates into lifeless formularies. The voice of the Master, the roll of thunder that shook and swayed mankind, is stilled into silence. Words that rang, words that glowed and burnt like torches, inspire us no more. The message is there. It is our eyes that have lost their sight. It is we who do not understand. And then comes the Reformer. It is his business to put a new life into religion. Having lived and tested and rediscovered the truth of the old faith, he puts a fresh vigour into it. The subjective condition of these men it is difficult for us to visualise to ourselves. Their experiences are so uncommon that only those can really know them, who have themselves had similar experiences. Any attempt at word-picture, on their own part, would at best be allegorical,

because the external world of objective experience offers nothing that could render the phenomenon universally comprehensible. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement, relates one of his visions: "I saw that I was God. The Canopies of Godhood stood all around. I was no more I. My own being was demolished, and God was over all." The *Sufis* of Islam call this state "Fana fi'llah", i. e. losing one's identity in God. It removes one from the world. Those who attain to this stage of spiritual development live henceforth for God alone. The world and its good things have no longer any attraction for them. Moved by the power of Truth alone, they address their fellow-men. The old message rings and throbs again with vigour. At their word, scales fall from the eyes of men, and the dead rise to life.

Islam has witnessed the rise of many such men. There is no country in the Muslim world and no century in the history of Islam but can point to a number of such saintly figures. And it would be a most interesting as well as instructive task to study these men and their works. They were the living witnesses of the power and truth of Islam, and any one who desires to know the spirit and genius of that wondrous faith must needs turn to these great luminaries. Their great spiritual gifts and their wealth of thought have rendered the religious literature of Islam the richest in the world. Translations of oriental thought into European languages are very difficult, if not impossible, and whatever translations have been made, are the work of philologists, men devoid of the fire of prophethood or the imagination of the poet, who, so at least it appears from their manner of reasoning, believe neither in God nor in man, nor in genius or originality, except what they claim for their own works. Their

pictures of Islam and of the leaders of thought in Islam have no relation whatever with reality. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was one of these great leaders of thought in Islam, and one of its greatest champions, who devoted his whole life to its service. It is as a representative of Islam that the following pages are given to a study of the movement that was set on foot by him.



II

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

To understand the true significance of the work of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, it is necessary to recall to ourselves the conditions prevalent in India in the Nineteenth Century, especially with reference to religion. It was in the first half of that Century that the conquest of India by England was completed, and it was in the second half that the results of that conquest began to make themselves apparent. Ruthless measures adopted by the conqueror after the great Mutiny to crush the spirit of revolt and strike terror into the hearts of the people, and the subsequent disarmament of the country, had completed the process of physical enslavement. This was followed by a period of mental slavery. And it was against this creeping moral and intellectual thralldom that the soul of the East rose in revolt in the person of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.

Two forces are seen to be at work in India in the Nineteenth Century. Christianity and Scepticism, a strange combination, indeed, when we think of the history of the development of the spirit of Scepticism in Europe itself. But when the field is large enough, even such mutually antagonistic forces as Christianity and Scepticism can find

free scope for their play. And India is a huge country,— India with its immense area and a vast population consisting, racially as well as by religion and culture, of the most heterogeneous elements. On this vast field it was possible for these two forces to work without coming into collision with one another.

And first Christianity, which had made its entry into India when the Mughal Empire was yet in the making. Jesuits were the first Christian missionaries, who came to India under the Portuguese flag. They worked on the Western Coast and in the South, where the Portuguese had gained political influence by conquest or otherwise. These localities lay far beyond the limits of the Mughal Empire, and the Jesuits were free to employ their usual methods of religious conversion. Liberal use was made of fire and the sword and the unusually large number of Christians on the Western Coast and in the South, almost all of whom belong to the Roman Catholic communion, otherwise so rarely met with in India, are witnesses to the efficiency with which the Jesuits pursued their aims. Their activities had been, however, limited to localities and to peoples that had never come within the pale of Indian or Islamic civilisation. The real danger to India from Christianity came with the advent of the Protestant missionaries, whose activities received naturally a great support from the prestige which the religion of the ruling race always enjoys among the subject peoples. In the place of the brute force that had been employed by the Roman Catholics, these Protestant missionaries made use of a well-organised propaganda and liberal use of money to further their aims. There can be no moral objection to any religious propaganda, provided it is carried on in a spirit of honesty and fair play. By honest

propaganda I mean two things: firstly, that it should make a clean and truthful representation of the teachings; it seeks to popularise, and should practise no deception; secondly, that when a religion feels itself to be called upon through sheer necessity, to criticise another faith, the criticism should be rational, fair and *just*. It does not become a religion, if it claims to serve the interests of truth, to misrepresent another religion which it seeks to overthrow. For myself, I have made a firm rule, which is that when a religion makes use, in its campaigns against other religions, of the weapons of falsehood, misrepresentation, calumny and abuse, I hold that religion itself to be false, vile, base, far too foul to be worthy the acceptance of an honest man. Fairness and even chivalrous generosity to other faiths come naturally to a Muslim, of whose faith it is part and parcel to revere the founders of all revealed religions the same as he reveres Muhammad, the Founder of Islam. Indeed, the Holy Qur'an (6 : 109) goes as far as to say that a Muslim must not injure the religious feelings even of the followers of those religions which are apparently false. But the Christian missionary literature is, in those parts which are devoted to attacks on other religions, full of muck and filth of the most stinking kind. There is nothing too sacred or too holy for the tongue or the pen of the Christian missionary either in the institutions or the persons of the founders of other religions. Jesus, if we are to judge by the practice of men who bear his name, seems to have given them a license for the vilification of other faiths when he called the former prophets "thieves and robbers" (Jn. 10: 8), while St. Paul gave his sanction to the use of lies, when they were needed for the spread of their faith. And the Christian missionary has made most extensive use of these two weapons of vilification and misrepresentation in Eastern

lands. On the positive side, *i. e.* the representation of its own teachings, Christianity could have no success in the East. It is not a rational religion. Its dogmas are repugnant to human reason, while on the ethical side it has nothing to offer. The social morals of Christian communities, whether in the East or the West, have never been very exemplary. Wine, women and gambling have always been the sore afflictions of Christendom. But even in the matter of pure scriptural teaching, in spite of the rottenness of popular Hinduism, that faith has, in its philosophic aspect, teachings far nobler and higher than anything Christianity possesses; while to contend with Islam on the basis of moral Philosophy is, so to speak, to fight with a mountain. Christianity, then, used these two weapons of misrepresentation and vilification, and with these weapons she carried on an extensive propaganda. But this propaganda alone could not have had the success that it actually did have, if it had not been reinforced by another factor that came into play with the establishment of British rule in India. This was the spirit of Scepticism of which I have spoken above.

This Scepticism was the result of the new educational system introduced into India by the British in the second quarter of the Nineteenth Century. Persian had been the language of polite speech as well as of literature and official life for centuries. The study of Arabic among the Muslims and of Sanskrit among the Hindus had always formed a most important element in the education of the people. But under the new regime, English took the place of Persian and Arabic or Sanskrit. Henceforth, Government offices were open only to those who knew English. This policy brought about an utter break with the past and its traditions. Before long there grew up in India a generation who knew nothing of the great and brilliant past of the great civilisations and cultures and sublime thought of the

East. Young men were fed upon Western literature, Western philosophy and Western thought. They were taught the histories of Greece and Rome, of England and modern Europe. The tiny text-books on the history of India were the work of Christian missionaries or British officers, and were naturally written with a purpose. The history of Islam and Muslim lands found no place in the educational curriculum. Oriental literature fell into desuetude. The generation brought up in this manner was before long naturally led to despise their own and to look to the West alone as the source of all goodness and excellence. They called themselves the men of the "New Light." And how haughty and overbearing they were and proud of this "New Light!" This was by itself a great loss to India. It meant that the spirit of slavery was entering into their hearts, because this tendency soon set up a new standard of values and these men of the New Light began to judge things as good and bad, not on any rational principle, but by the accident of its origin. If it was of Western origin, it was good; if Eastern, then bad, of course! The soul of India was indeed in the pangs of death.

In the development of physical sciences and their application to technology and industry, the Nineteenth Century was simply wonderful. It was brilliant. Indeed its very brilliance dazzled and blinded the eyes of young India, that was brought into sudden contact with the advanced civilisation of Europe. But as regards religion, the thought of the Century was grossly materialistic, sceptic and even positively antagonistic to Religion. And this Scepticism took hold of India as well, which was being fed on Western thought.

Bengal was the first province of India to fall into British hands, and Bengal was also the first to face the danger from Christianity and Scepticism. It was out of the

question that the intelligent Hindu should accept Christianity, which was as superstitious and irrational as his own faith. He could also no longer maintain Hinduism, on account of its superstitions, and some apparently immoral and cruel customs. It was one of the noblest sons of Bengal who took up the challenge of the age. Raja Ram Mohan Roy studied the Qur'an and proclaimed a new faith. It is a remarkable fact that all religions that have come into existence since the Qur'an was revealed, have had to borrow their teachings from Islam: Sikhism in the Punjab, Brahmo Samaj in Bengal, and the latest movement of Bahaism in Persia. The last mentioned has taken all its teachings bodily from the Qur'an, and now brazenly claims them to be brand new, having been preached for the first time in the history of mankind by one Husain Ali, a Persian who had been born and brought up in Islam! Raja Ram Mohan Roy rejected the Vedas and the rest of the Hindu scriptures, discarded idolworship, taught belief in one God, and proclaimed, above all, that the founders of all religions, in whatever age or country they might have appeared, were to be equally revered. But Brahmo Samaj never appealed to the general Hindu public. First of all, its liberality of principles was repugnant to the unbending conservatism of Hindu character. Secondly, it lacked enthusiasm. Besides, there were some positive defects in it. If there is anything that invests religion with authority—and without authority religion degenerates into mere Philosophy—it is revelation. And Brahmo Samaj denied all revelation. Also, it provides no means, nor does it supply any impetus, for the moral and spiritual discipline of the individual. Lacking, as it does, these very necessary parts of religion, Brahmo Samaj could not become a religion. It could at best be an association of men of liberal views and broad sympathies, capable of moving with the times but itself giving no lead to the times, and as such it has remained

and will remain.

I need not waste many words upon the origin and activities of Arya Samaj. Whereas Brahmo Samaj was a compromise, in fact a surrender to the advancing tide of Scepticism, and was founded upon the idea of peace and good-will towards all, Arya Samaj, finding no sound principle in Hinduism itself by which the integrity of the Hindu community could be preserved, raised the hymn of hatred towards all and appealed to the baser passions of the people. Pandit Daya Nand introduced a system of polemics which it is impossible to distinguish from wholesale abuse. It has vitiated the moral atmosphere of India and robbed the country of peace. But the largest portion of its venom it has spent against Islam. Since the day of its birth Arya Samaj has carried on a most damaging propaganda against Islam. In the 19th Century perhaps the greatest danger to Islam in India was the Arya Samaj. *And the danger is not yet over:* It was and is the declared aim of the Arya Samaj to drive Islam out of India, and the Hindus following the lead of Arya Samaj are using all possible fair and foul methods to attain their object. The activities of the Arya Samaj and the spirit of fanaticism and hatred that animates its followers are well-known to the Indian public and I need not waste any more words over it. It only remains to emphasise the fact that Swami Daya Nand made absolutely no contribution to the religious thought of India. Even in his criticism of Islam he exhibited a beggarly dependence upon the writings of Christian missionaries, whom he otherwise hated. Trenchant, reasoned and well founded criticism is very often useful, because it gives an impetus to creative thought. But his criticism was miserably wanting in originality and creativeness, in place of which he made abundant use of his native virulence and poison, which

have ever since characterised the ebullitions of his followers.

The third reform movement that was occasioned by India's contact with Europe was among the Muslims under the leadership of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, the founder of the famous M. A. O. College (now Muslim University) at Aligarh. Muslims had been the rulers of India for centuries before the English ousted them from power. The conquered peoples do not love their rulers; they never do, and it was quite natural that the Muslims should avoid all contact with the English and their institutions. To use an expression made world-famous by Mr. Ghandi, it was a quiet non-violent non-co-operation with the English.*

*It was the second movement of its kind. The first one was in Bengal, when the Muslims of that province refused to send their children to the newly-founded English college at Calcutta. The Muslims of Bengal have never been able to make up the loss they suffered through this folly of theirs at that time. The Great Mutiny of 1857 had been the united action of the Hindus and the Mussulmans. But after the Mutiny had been quelled, although the Hindus immediately submitted and began to co-operate with the British, the Musalmans still held aloof for a long time. The third movement of non-co-operation occurred in 1920 under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and there was an apparent unity between the Hindus and Mussalmans throughout India. But it was only apparent. There has been no time in India when the Hindus have really stood by their declaration of non-co-operation. Six years have passed over this movement. With the exception of Mahatma Gandhi, out of 240 million Hindus there is no one who has not openly abused the idea of non-co operation, and we have before us the spectacle of a nation devoid of all faith and honour. On the other hand, the Muslims are still declaring their adherence to the idea and are acting upon it. As a result, they have lost all what they had gained from the unremitting labours of the last fifty years. "Yes, we have lost much," says the Muslim youth, "but it shows that we still possess a character and we stand by our word." He is right, but in the meantime, life is becoming unbearable to the Muslims in India. Hindus plan riots, attack them unawares, rob and plunder and massacre them, and there is no help, because the police, the guardians of peace, and the courts of justice, indeed, the entire machinery of government fell into Hindu hands, while the Muslims, in faithfulness and loyalty to the national convention, were non-co-operating. From my own personal knowledge of some of

The far-seeing eye of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan saw the danger the Muslims of India were running through their aloofness. He saw that unless they took up modern education, they would be left behind in the race of intellectual, political and economic advancement. Shaking off the feeling of despondency that had come over him after the mutiny he threw himself into work and led a powerful propaganda through the length and breadth of India. His labours were crowned with success. Hundreds of high schools and two big colleges came into existence. Indeed, the great Syed can with fairness be called the creator of Muslim educational institutions in India.

But Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was not strong enough to withstand the tendencies of the age, and his vision was limited to the immediate necessities of the times rather than to the greater and higher ideal of building up a proud and self-conscious nation. The immediate political and economic requirements so completely absorbed his attention that the higher ideal never dawned upon him. He was a practical politician who grapples with different questions severally as they arise, and not a philosopher whose thought covers vast periods of time. He placed the loaves and fishes of government offices before the younger folk as the highest aim of their endeavours and the Zion of their aspirations, whereas the Muslims of India had fallen from a high estate, and it was the task of the true

(concluded from foot of last page.)

so-called Hindu patriots I can say that they are carrying on a propaganda against the Indian Muslims even in foreign lands and lose no opportunity of bringing them into ill repute. I feel no hesitation in saying that non-cooperation is a policy of communal suicide for the Musalmans of India, and the sooner they gave it up the better. The experiences of a whole century ought to be enough to convince them of the hopelessness of joint action with the Hindus, who on the contrary, are straining every nerve to wipe Islam out of India.

leader to point out the way, by which they could hope to attain to their lost greatness once more.

It is well here to throw a glance over the history of India and study the causes of the fall of the Muslim rule ; for, anyone who fails to take account of these and attempts to build up the future of India on empiric lines is bound to fail. European writers have invariably ascribed the fall of the Mughal empire to the harshness of Emperor Aurangzeb on the Hindus. As one who has shed tears of anguish, and no metaphorical tears either, on the present deplorable condition of India, I wish that Aurangzeb had really done one hundredth part of what he is actually accused of having done. India would have been then a far happier country to-day than it is. But the European view is wholly unscientific. Opinion in India has been crystallising on this point of late years, and it is beginning to be perceived with increasing clearness that the true causes of the fall of the Mughal empire are to be sought in the administration of Akbar called by his European admirers "the Great", and his immediate successors, who were emperors in reality but were foolish enough to pretend to rule as national kings. Aurangzeb was the greatest of the Mughals, in fact the greatest emperor known to the history of India. The ablest, the bravest and the greatest of them all, he was the only one of them, who was conscious of an enlightened statecraft. Aurangzeb was a saint; he was the undisputed master of the revenues of a vast empire, but for his personal expenses he depended upon his private earnings from calligraphy. But Aurangzeb had exhausted the race. The House of Timur had born valiant princes and daring leaders, but it appears as if the energies of the whole race had concentrated and spent themselves upon this one man. And it

requires but a passing glance on the portraits of those who followed him on the throne of the Great Mughals to show us what poor soft men they were, fit only to sit in monasteries and count beads or teach infants in schools rather than govern an empire. The disappearance of the House of Timur after Aurangzeb was a natural unavoidable necessity, and to hold him responsible for results which were in reality the effects of the normal working of biologic laws is simply stupid.

My own reading of the history of India, however, leads me to a wholly different opinion, and I do not know whether it is shared by any one else. In my opinion, the real and ultimate cause that brought about the fall of the Muslim dominion in India and made the conquest of that country possible by England, was that the Muslim peoples of India had lost the sense of solidarity and oneness. They had forgotten that they were one people. Mughal rule was despotic, and despotism is the weakest form of political organism, the continuation of which is possible only by the occasional introduction of fresh blood through change of dynasties. That Muslim India could not replace the degenerate dynasty of the Mughals by a new one is an evidence of the utter degeneration of the whole people. But we have positive evidences of the fact that Muslim India had become thoroughly degenerate. We find Muslim soldiers fighting under the flag of Britain against their Muslim fellow-countrymen. Indeed, it has been said with perfect truth that India was conquered by Indians with Indian money for England. English conquest of India would have been wholly and utterly impossible if the Muslims had preserved their sense of oneness. If there is anything that converts a mere herd of people into a nation, it is the consciousness of a common ideal. The binding force is always the consciousness of a common destiny, a

common ideal, a common aim, a community of aspirations, a sense of being one in weal or woe. The despotism of the Mughal rulers had killed this sense, and with the fall of the rulers the people perished. And the Indian Muslims will not become a great people until they have learnt that they are one people, that they rise or fall together, that they have one common destiny. This was the work of a leader in the Nineteenth Century and it is also today,—a leader who should awaken the people to the sense that their weal and their woe, their losses and their gains are the losses and gains of the people as a whole, that they have one common destiny, that they are members of one body, one organism that stands or falls together. Above all, such a leader should awaken the sense of pride and self-respect among the people individually as well as collectively. For pride and self-respect and confidence in oneself are the most necessary factors for strengthening the feeling of nationality.

And Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, for all his greatness, was the last person on earth to be able to bring about any of these results. On the contrary, he did his level best to create a slavish mentality among his people. To him, West was the home of all excellence and Western thought the acme of all goodness. Under his care, Aligarh became the centre of Western culture in India. His blind and whole-hearted devotion to the West and its ways opened before long the flood-gates of Scepticism, and he himself was carried away by the current. No doubt, he struggled hard against the new forces. But he had shown the dragon's teeth and knew not how to grapple with the army of friends that had cropped up. His friends had already warned him of the consequences of his blind admiration of the West. Let the boys learn modern

sciences, they said, but keep them to the Eastern ways and habits of thought, and put the hoards of Eastern literature before them as well. But Sir Syed Ahmad had carried all opposition before him. And now, when he became aware of the danger, he was found powerless to meet it.

A change was certainly needed in the religious outlook of the Indian Musalmans. Things could not continue as they had been. A century and a half of anarchy and bloodshed had stifled the spiritual life of the country. It had been a period of most appalling intellectual barrenness. This barrenness and the stark ignorance that stalked over the length and breadth of India could lead to only one consequence, Superstition. No doubt, here and there had arisen men who had tried to remedy this state of affairs; but the rule of violence and political anarchy had proved too strong for them. Consequently, grossest superstitions prevailed in the land. It may be said without the least exaggeration that the India of the Nineteenth Century resembled Europe of the early Middle Ages in every detail. The learned who ought to have awakened the people to better things became victims of greed and encouraged superstition. It was with these charlatans, these so-called Maulvis, it was with this pack of superstition-loving, sanctimonious humbugs, who preyed upon the ignorance of the masses and discouraged enquiry, that the men of the new light came into conflict. The latter refused to acknowledge the authority of these ignorant religionists, who felt hit very hard thereby in their pride and their purses. Finding that authority was passing from their hands, they declared Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, who was at the head of the new movement, a *Kafir*. The fight was very lively. There was blind, ignorant fanaticism on one side and sound learning on the other. But judging the affair in the light of subsequent events, one

can only say that the religionists had been guilty of nothing more than an exaggeration, which was certainly very harmful, but it was no more than an exaggeration. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and his followers had not become heathens. They were certainly better Muslims than their opponents. But the attitude taken up by Sir Syed was such that it could not but lead to indifferentism, which in practical life is difficult to distinguish from Atheism.

Sir Syed was undoubtedly aware of the religious and intellectual movements in the country and was quite conscious of their probable effects on the religious life of the Musalmans. He had excellent intentions and was sincere in his endeavours; but he was unfit for the task. He was a learned man, but had no inner light, the light of personal experience which is the only true foundation of faith. Lacking this foundation as he did, he endeavoured to remove superstition by substituting for it something which was only another superstition. He was as it were haunted by a sense of the superiority of the West; it had become a kind of obsession with him, and accordingly, he set to work to explain religion in the light of Western philosophy and science. Also he knew no modern philosophy and no modern science. He knew no European language. All he knew of these was what he had gathered second-hand from the talks of his friends and perhaps also from the criticisms of Islam by its opponents. In the Nineteenth Century, it was a favourite subject with European writers to expatiate upon the conflict between religion and science. The fever had spread to India as well, and there were few, who escaped it. It never occurred to the Indian controversialists who quoted European authors in their discussions, that religion in the West meant Christianity, and that between science and Christianity there could certainly be no

agreement, while the case of Islam was quite different. The contrast, indeed, is very remarkable. Islam encouraged science and philosophy when it was at the height of its power, and the Muslims gave up scientific pursuits when their political power declined. Christianity, on the contrary, proscribed and suppressed every intellectual movement, when it was powerful, and science began to make progress in Europe only when Christianity had lost all power. Sir Syed, too, as I have already pointed out, attempted to explain away religion in the light of science which he did not know. His writings carried no conviction. The religion he placed before the people was a kind of intellectual exercise. In effect, it could hardly be distinguished from the Brahmo Samaj of which I have above spoken. It would certainly be ungrateful to deny the great services rendered by Sir Syed to the cause of Islam in India. But for the work of religious reform he was unfit, and whatever he did in this respect is already dead, of interest only to the antiquarian.

To put it briefly, religious situation in India in the second half of the Nineteenth Century was this: Virulent and incessant attacks were being made upon Islam by Christianity and Arya Samaj; a very large part of the Musalmans of India were sunk in ignorance and superstition and gone far away from true Islam; while those who had been educated in modern schools and were capable of free thought were sceptical, and worse than this, they had become intellectual slaves of the West—a kind of slavery worse than anything imaginable. The task, in its magnitude and immensity, was well-nigh hopeless. It required not one but several reformers who should set themselves each to one particular branch of work. And yet, nothing daunted, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad alone took up the whole burden and manfully set himself to the great task.

III

BRIEF SKETCH OF THE FOUNDER'S LIFE.

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was born in 1839 at Qadian, about seventy miles from Lahore. He was descended from a noble ancient family. The original home of the family was Khurasan, a province of Persia, where they had long held large estates and high dignities. A member of the family, Mirza Hadi Beg, separated himself from the rest and accompanied by about two hundred attendants migrated to India in 1530, when the first Mughal Emperor Babar ruled the land. The Emperor granted him a large estate with the right to exercise the powers of a Qadi of magistrate. It was from this circumstance that the village founded by the immigrants to which they had given the name "Islampur" began to be called "Islampur Qadian," *i.e.* belonging to the Qadis, which name became shortened in course of time simply to Qadian. During the anarchy which followed upon the break-up of the Mughal Empire the estate, which then consisted of only eighty-five villages became a small independent state. In those rough times, the court of the Mirzas was a home of security where many a learned man found a warm reception. But the state at last succumbed to the continuous attacks of the Sikhs, and although Qadian itself, which was a fortified place, held out for a long time, this too was captured by the Sikhs who had effected an entry within the walls on false pretence, and the then chief of the place, Mirza Ata Muhammad, the grandfather of our hero, was made prisoner along with his family; their houses and mosques were desolated and their library burned down. The family remained in exile for a long time, until in the closing years of Ranjit Singh's reign, who died in 1839, the year in which Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was born, his father Mirza Ghulam Murtaza obtained five villages back from the

Sikh ruler and the family was allowed to return to their ancestral home. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad refers to this in one of his writings as follows : "At the time of my birth the days of distress of the family had changed into those of comparative prosperity, and it is the mercy of God that I did not witness any of the afflictions of the times of distress, but neither did I inherit the greatness and estate of my forefathers." Several interesting particulars about the family would be found in Sir Lepel Griffin's "Punjab Chiefs."

The Mirza was educated at home. That was the custom of all noble families in those days. When he was six years of age, a tutor was engaged to teach him the Holy Quran and the Persian language. At ten, he studied some works on Arabic Grammar with another teacher. A third tutor was employed at seventeen, with whom he studied Arabic literature, Syntax, and logic. Medicine he studied with his father, who was himself a physician of note. Indeed, Qadian maintained its reputation for medical skill down to 1914.

From his early youth, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had been of studious habits and spent most of his time in seclusion with his books. But his father had different aims in view. When the Sikh power had been shattered and the Punjab had been annexed to the British dominions, Mirza Ghulam Murtaza tried to recover his old estate, which had been in the possession of his house for centuries. He spared no expense and no labour to this end. But it was all in vain. All his efforts proved fruitless. The disappointment and worries of his father consequent upon his failure to recover his estate left a deep impression on the son and gave a new turn to his life. The father wanted him to leave his books

alone, come out of his seclusion and help him to rebuild the shattered fortunes of the family. But the young Mirza's mind was moulded in quite another frame. In unquestioning obedience to his father's wishes he did what he was told to do. But attending law-courts, waiting upon officials, and running here and there on affairs which to him appeared of no value, was against his nature. To such minds as Mirza's was, mere business and financial matters are always irksome, and the disability stuck to him throughout life. Finding him hopeless at home, his father packed him off to Sialkot, another Punjab city a considerable distance from his home, to take up employment in a government office. This happened in 1864 when he was 25 years old. Here too he mixed very little with people. Directly the day's work was finished, he would go straight to his lodgings, plunge into solitude and bury himself in books. But the man of worth does not and cannot hide, and before long we find even in his solitude a small circle of congenial spirits gathered round him, to whom he expounds religious truths with a power and clearness unusual for a man of his years.

The Mirza stayed at Sialkot for four years. His heart was certainly not in the routine of official drudgery, and his father, finding him not making any headway even in this new walk of life recalled him in 1868. Back at home, he now gave himself up entirely to study and meditation. No doubt, domestic duties and agricultural affairs too received his attention, but he devoted the major part of his time to the critical study of the Holy Quran, its commentaries and the Sayings of the Prophet. Continuous study, prayers and meditation were now preparing him for the great work that lay before him. It appears as if nature was gathering in his breast materials for a volcano

which burst out with terrific force in the latter part of his life. But the man himself was thinking quite different thoughts. We can see that from a letter which he wrote to his father as an apology for his backwardness in worldly affairs, in which he informed him "with all filial affection and respect" that it was his heart's desire that he (Ghulam Ahmad) should spend the rest of his days in the nook of solitude, keep aloof from the society of men and live on the love of Him, the Pure One. Although still in the prime of life, he had in a way retired from the world. He definitely and finally renounced every desire for worldly advancement. He wrote and composed poems in which he poured out his soul in the love of God and His Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of God be upon him); he studied and he meditated. With regard to his religious exercises one thing is worth noticing. The Mirza belonged to no order of Sufis, and followed none of those ascetic and self-mortifying practices which are prescribed by various orders, and which are so unhealthy both from the mental as well as from the physical points of view—practices which are, to do the Sufi justice, no doubt far less horrible than those we come across with such frequency in the history of the Christian Church, which latter indeed make the hair stand on end, but practices which are none the less unhealthy and against the clear teachings of Islam. The Mirza's one great devotional exercise was the study of the Holy Quran in solitude.

The year 1880 saw the publication of the first two parts of his famous work the *Barahin-i-Ahmadiyya*. The full title of this book, which also explains the nature of its contents, runs thus: *Al-Barahin-ul-Ahmadiyya ala Haqqiyat-i-Kitab-illah-il-Quran wa-n-Nabuwat-il-Muhammadiyah*

(i.e. Proofs of the Truth of the Book of God, the Quran, and of the Prophethood of Muhammad by Ahmad), by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Chief of Qadian, etc. The Mirza had been contributing for some years to various Urdu journals, and had already made a name for himself as one who was entitled to speak on religion with authority. In this treatise he proposed to support his thesis—the Truth of Islam—with several hundred arguments which were to be all rational and yet all derived from the Holy Quran itself and he challenged the champions of all other faiths to refute his arguments. The challenge was accompanied with a reward of ten thousand rupees to any who could bring forth similar arguments for the truth of his own faith, at least one fifth if not equal in number, or failing that, to refute the author's own arguments. This challenge is on pages 19-23 of the work, and although the author is no longer in our midst, the challenge with reward is still in force. The announcement was received with joy and gladness by the Mussalman public and with ridicule and satire by the Christians and Arya Samajists, but no one had the courage to take up the challenge. Two years latter appeared the third part which also contained the claim to be the Reformer (Mujad did) of the next following fourteenth Century of Islam. The advent of the Reformer had been waited for, and for this reason his claim was hailed with delight by the learned. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was accepted as Reformer through the length and breadth of India. In 1884 appeared the fourth part of the work, at the end of which I find the following notice:—

In the beginning, when the compilation of this book was taken in hand, its condition was different. After that, the sudden flashing of the power of God revealed, like it had done to Moses, to this humb-

best of God's servants a world which he had not known before. This humble one had been wandering before in the night of his own thoughts, when suddenly, from behind the curtain of the Unseen, the Voice called, Verily, I am thy Lord, and secrets were revealed, to which reason and imagination had no access. So then now the guardian and protector of this book, outwardly as well inwardly, is God, the Lord of the worlds. I do not know to what extent He will augment this book; and in truth, whatever glories of the truth of Islam He has already revealed in these four volumes, even they are enough for carrying conviction, and His mercy and grace hold out the hope that until. He has wholly dispelled the darkness of doubt and uncertainty. His Divine Hand will always assist the truth. Althugh this humble one places no reliance upon life, he rejoices, however, that He, Who is Ever-living and Self-subsistent, by Whom all things live and subsist, and Who is above death and extinction, will assist the faith of Islam to the last day, and that His Majesty the Seal of the Prophets, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, is the recipient of such mercies and graces of God as no other prophet ever was."

The Mirza was never able to finish the great work he had planned. Later in life he added a fifth part, but that had arisen out of the necessities of the times, and was not quite on the lines of the original plan. Increasing occupations incidental to his new vocation as Reformer left him no time. The value of the "Barahin" may be judged from a contemporary review of the work which appeared in six successive issues of the monthly journal

Ishaat-us-Sunna (June—November, 1884) and covered 152 pages. After giving a detailed summary of the contents, the reviewer gives his estimate of the book in the following words:—

“In our opinion, this book, judged by the condition of the present age, is a work the like of which has not so far been written in the history of Islam, and for the future we cannot say. Its author has also displayed such steadfastness in advancing the cause of Islam with money and personal labour, with pen and speech and with his own personal spiritual life, that a parallel of it is rarely met with in the Musalmans of former times. Should any one consider these remarks of ours as Eastern exaggeration, then let him point out at least one such book, in which Islam has been defended with as much force against all religions hostile to Islam, especially the *Brahmo-Samaj*, and the *Arya-Samaj*. Also let him name a couple of such champions of Islam who, besides supporting the cause of Islam with money and personal labour, with writings and with speech, have also undertaken to advance that cause with their own lives and personal spiritual experiences, and have challenged the opponents of Islam and deniers of revelation with the same power and authority that all who doubt the fact of revelation should go to them to convince themselves by observation and experience.”

By “spiritual life” and “spiritual experiences” the writer of the above review means the revelations of the Mirza mentioned in the *Barahin*, many of which he quotes and explains for the benefit of his readers. As I write these words, sitting in Berlin as I am, involuntarily I become

conscious of my European surroundings. One may well ask how is this that even in this scientific age one should be speaking of Revelation! Not that there is any inherent opposition between science and Revelation, and if there is any scientist (we are no longer in the Nineteenth Century when discoveries in the realm of physical sciences following with great rapidity one upon the other had unbalanced the minds of men) who claims that science has positively proved the impossibility of revelation, that scientist only parades his own ignorance and foolishness. The causes, why the modern Westerners are so sceptical towards revelation, are to be traced not to any positive unassailable intellectual conviction but to quite other causes. Indeed, I feel no hesitation in saying that one of the chief causes that have given birth to modern scepticism and atheism has been Christianity. Its extraordinary claims, its irrational teachings and its unnatural and almost suicidal ethics could be upheld only by political power, and when that power fell, and people became free to think for themselves Christianity as a religion lost its prestige, and as to the the Europeans 'Religion' means nothing but Christianity, the fall of Christianity has meant in Europe, the fall of Religion itself. This has been one of the two great causes of European scepticism, the other being exclusive devotion to physical sciences and technology, which absorb all their attention, leaving them no time for matters spiritual. This devotion is, however, a very late phenomenon, which in view of the long history of Christianity can be ignored. But my contention is that communion with God or revelation which is a condition of very high spiritual development has always been wanting in European religious life, and that the whole history of Christianity has been barren of that high spiritual development which is a preliminary

condition for revelation to take place. Christians by taking a man as their God put of themselves a stop to their spiritual development. Whereas a Muslim sees his way open to become the equal of Jesus or Moses of Abraham(1), whereas the Muslim consciously tries to walk in the footsteps of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and act and live in the spirit in which he lived and acted, the believing Christian glories in the wonders and miracles that Jesus performed, admires the words he uttered, but never dreams of imitating Jesus in his manner of life or acting in this spirit. That this peculiarity has characterised Christianity from the very beginning is apparent from the fact that his so-called "Lives," the Gospels, are occupied mostly in relating wonders or words, but tell us nothing about the life that he actually lived. The Holy Quran has a powerful argument against this tendency of deification that was so prevalent among the ancient peoples: "They say, What! Has God raised up a mortal to be an apostle? Say, Had there been on the earth angels walking about as settlers, We would certainly have sent down to them from heaven an angel as an apostle." (17, 94-95). The deification of Jesus rendered the pattern of his life purposeless, hence the poverty of spiritual life in Christendom. And

(1). *The Muslim prays : " Guide us on the right path, the path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours " (1, 5-6), and the Quran explains in 4, 69 who these are : " And whosoever obeys God and the Prophet, these are those upon whom God has bestowed favours from among the prophets and the truthful and the faithful and the good, and a goodly company are they."*

the absence of Divine Communion (2), consequent upon this barrenness, has become an argument against the fact of revelation at all. This argument is now being used retrospectively, and rationalistic apologists of Christianity are trying to prove that Jesus never claimed to base his teaching upon revelation, that he too was a kind of rationalist (shall we pity the rationalists who thus make painful efforts to get into the company of Jesus, or pity Jesus who is being brought down to their level?), who taught, not because the teaching was revealed to him from a source external to him, but from his own self and by his own personal authority (3). In addition to this barrenness

(2). *The so-called Divine or Holy Communion in the Christian Churches, which consists of eating the flesh and blood of Lord Jesus Christ, in reality nothing more than bread and wine, has nothing spiritual about it. This institution is inherited from Bacchic rites, and is based upon the notion that by eating the flesh of a dead hero, one inherits his virtues and powers. African Cannibalism and Christianity have this thing in common.*

(3). *The argument is wholly wrong. It is fallacious, being based on the assumption that the Gospels say that he taught by his own authority, and do not say that he taught from revelation. Now, if it could be proved conclusively that the Gospels do not contain any indication whatever that Jesus claimed to teach from revelation, that circumstance would not be conclusive to prove that he really never made that claim, for the simple reason that the Gospels, upon which the argument is based, are not reliable historical documents by any dictum of historical criticism. They were on the contrary written with the set purpose of showing that he was super-human, that he was God in human flesh and that as such he taught by his own personal authority and did not stand in need of revelation. When the Gospels were written with that purpose, any argument based upon them, then, to prove that Jesus did not claim to teach by revelation would be false. Secondly, the argument is not based upon sufficient evidence, inasmuch as it ignores those passages in the Gospels which point to the contrary, and such passages are numerous in the Gospels, in which Jesus confesses his own helplessness and want of knowledge, "except what the Father who sent him had revealed to him."*

of spiritual life, when we think of the many puerilities in the Bible, where prophets prophecy to order, where the Holy Ghost appears as tongues of fire and the recipients of the Holy Ghost mumble unintelligible gibberish, and in Christianity in which the Holy Ghost enters into a person by the laying of hands by a bishop and not through any moral or spiritual enlightenment, whereby religion becomes so much hocus-pocus nonsense,—I say, in face of these things, it is not at all surprising if one should begin to look upon religion with doubt and call the fact of revelation into question. It has been different in Islam and the history of Islam presents to us a brilliant galaxy of personalities who, by walking in the footsteps of Muhammad, have attained to great spiritual heights and stood as living evidences of the truth of religion. If any one, therefore, at any time from among the Muslims were to lay claim to revelation, there will be, to the Muslims at least, nothing inherently questionable in such a claim, provided that necessary conditions are there, which are: absolute purity of public and private life, far-reaching intelligence, spiritual enlightenment and deep thought. That his thinking was profound, that his learning was vast, that his spiritual insight was keen, and that he was altogether a man of extraordinary intelligence, is apparent from the writings of Mirza Ghulam 'Ahmad. As to the irreproachable purity of his private and public life, it is enough to say that during all those storms of opposition which broke upon him during the latter part of his life, not even his bitterest enemies ever attacked his personal character. As to revelation itself, it is a peculiar relation between God and the recipient, a relation from which the entire world is shut out. The whole matter depends, besides the conditions above mentioned, upon his own word. We may accept his claim if we can depend upon his veracity, or reject it if

we think him a liar. But can we with justice accuse of lying against God him who is all truth towards men, who is burning with the love of those who hate him, who renounces every personal comfort to serve those who would bring him to disgrace and ruin?

There is another kind of evidence which is more solid. It is Prophecy. Want of space forbids me to go into the question of prophecies at any length. Besides, in taking an estimate of the actual work done by a man, which is the only aim we have before us in writing this essay, it is not necessary to go into this question at all. Readers will find an excellent discussion of the problem in "*The Ahmadia Movement*," (part IV) by Maulana Muhammad Ali, M.A., LL.B., President, Ahmadia Anjuman Ishaat Islam, Lahore, and a fuller discussion in his Urdu book "*Masih Mau-ud*," pp. 261-297. It is enough here to say that the Mirza made many prophecies, a large number of which were fulfilled in his life-time and some after his death. I mention here only one, which concerns an event which the world is in no hurry to forget. I mean the world war. The prophecy was published in a manifesto on 8th April, 1905, under the heading, "A Warning" and is to be found in the *Review of Religions*, Vol. 4, April 1905, p. 159 and *Barahin-i-Ahmadia* Part 5, p. 120, where it runs as follows:—

"A sign is going to be manifested some time after this date. The villages and cities and fields shall be in a state of revolution on account of it. All of a sudden, all shall severely shake by a quaking, mortals and trees and mountains and seas. In the twinkling of an eye this earth shall turn upside down. The streams of blood shall flow as the water of rivers. The traveller shall feel the severity of that hour. The great and the small shall be in a state of prostration on account of this fear. Even the Czar at that hour shall be in a state of utmost distress," etc. etc.

In a note on this prophecy the Mirza says :—

“In the Divine revelation the word *Zalzalah* is repeated again and again but I cannot yet with certainty take the word in its literal significance. It might be that it is not an ordinary earthquake, but some other terrible disaster which should bring about a scene of the judgment day, the like of which the world has not seen, and a severe destruction should come upon lives and buildings.”

In another place he says, “Nor do I know when this will happen, whether in a few days or weeks or months or years.” The World War brought the explanation as well as the fulfilment of this prophecy in 1914, *i. e.* six years after his death.

We may now resume our narrative. His claim to revelation and to being the Reformer of the next-following Century of Islam was admitted by all. His work increased. In March 1886 he went to Hoshiarpur, a pretty little Punjab town at the foot of the Sawalik hills, to hold a controversy with an Arya Samajist leader. Contributions of both parties to this controversy, which was held in writing, were later embodied in a book called *Surma Chasm-i-Arya*. In 1888, he went to Ludhiana, a great Christian Missionary centre. It should be noted that so far Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had worked single-handed and had yet founded no religious community. It was at Ludhiana on the first of December, 1888, that he announced that he had been commanded by God to accept *bai-at* (1) from people. *Bai-at* is a most common institution in Muslim countries and its significance is well known. The Mirza had been asked

(1). Literally, *subjection* ; politically, the term means *allegiance to a king*, and in religious circles, *accepting some one as teacher or leader*.

by many even before that to take them into his *bai-at*, but he had refused, with the words that he had no authority. In 1888 he received the command and began to take *bai-at*, and foundations were thus laid of that community, which thirteen years later received the name of Ahmadia Community.

Uptil now the Mirza had had plain sailing. But the time was coming when his mettle should be tried, when storms of opposition and persecution should shake his being from its foundations, when he was to be called upon to face the fiery test and render proof of his worth. The hour came when he announced: "I am the Messiah whom the world is waiting for."

THE PROMISED MESSIAH.

Muhammad, may peace and the blessings of God be upon him, was the last of the prophets. And he was the last by no mere fiat. He is the last because through him religion attained to its completion, and because he was the recipient of a most perfect revelation. Muhammad was the last because Truth was revealed in its uttermost perfection through him. But he is the last in another sense too. He was the most perfect man that ever walked on earth. The Holy Quran calls him "the Man," (1) *i. e.* the type of true manhood, the true representative of humanity, the one in whose person all the beauties and excellences of humanity were brought together and found their manifestation in their highest form, so much so that his life, his way of acting have become the standards by which virtue can be measured, the *criteria*

1. "O Man ! By the Quran full of wisdom ! Most surely thou art one of the Messengers of God." (*Quran xxxvi, 143*)

by which the righteousness or otherwise of men's dealings are judged. Whereas the prophets of yore were distinguished by some one great excellence which shone above their other excellences, whereas Moses was distinguished by leadership of men, David by justice, Solomon by his royal grandeur and Jesus by humility, Muhammad combined in his person the leadership of Moses, the justice and power of David, the grandeur of Solomon and the humility of Jesus, and he exhibited these excellences in a much higher form and on a much grander scale than these had done. How beautifully sings the Persian poet of Muhammad's greatness :—

The beauty of Joseph, the wonder-working hand of Moses, the life-giving breath of Jesus.

They had these virtues, each in each; Thou alone hadst them all. These men, these ancient divine teachers whose greatness is a by-word among the nations,—they were the several phases of a prism and Mahammad was the prism itself, they were the facets of a well-cut diamond, and he was the diamond itself. The ancients had understood it well. Such was the blinding glory of his beauty, they said, “the lightening that almost took away their sight,” as the Holy Quran (ii, 20) characterises his advent,—a lightening in the spiritual dark of heathen Arabia—that his face remained hidden behind seventy veils, because the eye of man could not endure the full splendour of that glory. Can one wonder, then, that those who had had a glimpse of that great glory gave away their hearts to him and forsook all for his sake ?

Such was the man Muhammad. There is no degree of excellence beyond to what he had attained. In the realm of religion and spirituality there are no more truths that are waiting to be discovered by any future prophet.

His message is destined to remain to the end of all times. Says the Holy Quran: "Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of God and the Seal of the prophets" (xxxiii, 40). His name and the spiritual blessings to which his followers are heirs through him shall continue to the day of judgment. In other words, he is the last prophet, after whom there will be no other prophet*. Every kind of excellence having found its highest manifestation in his person, it goes without saying that any great teacher or reformer who rises after him shall represent or be a manifestation of some one of his excellences. Now, human excellences can broadly be divided into two classes, corresponding to the two ways in which nature manifests herself to us, the one grand and awe-inspiring and the other gentle and tender, both of which find their analogy in the two sexes. Whereas other divine teachers were each distinguished by some one of these two apparently opposite characteristics, Muhammad combined and harmonised both of them in his own person. The Holy Prophet of Islam

**One may well ask: When a person claims to receive revelation, does he not ipso facto claim to be a prophet as well? This question must be answered in the negative, for in Islam the mere fact of receiving revelation does not constitute one into a prophet. The Holy Quran mentions many persons, even women, as having received revelation, who were not prophets, e. g. the mother of Moses (xxviii, 7) etc., etc. Mere revelation according to Islam, is an acquisition, the reward of one's efforts at self-purification and enlightenment, whereas prophet-hood is of divine appointment. The necessity for this appointment cannot arise after the perfection of religion through Muhammad, peace and the blessings of God be upon him. A detailed discussion of the problem will be found in Maulana Muhammad Ali's comprehensive Urdu work An-nabuwat fi'l Islam. The question has also been discussed at a fair length in Masih-i-Mau-ud (Urdu) pp. 42-69*

bore two names, Ahmad given to him by his mother and Muhammad given by his grandfather. "Ahmad" denotes one who praises much, and "Muhammad" means highly praised. The two periods of the Prophet's life, the Meccan and the Medinite, correspond to these two names. At Mecca he was a humble, persecuted and suffering teacher, while at Medina he rules as a king honoured, exalted and loved by a grateful nation. Holiness and moral perfection (Ahmad) had been crowned with splendour and glory (Muhammad). And in the history of Islam, Reformers have arisen as manifestations of both of these characteristics. There have been reformers who wielded the scepter of imperial power, like Omar the Second and Emperor Aurangzeb of India, and there have been those in humbler stations too. These humbler ones may be called the manifestations of the attribute denoted by the name "Ahmad." Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, as I will show when I come to speak of his character, was one of these. He was a manifestation of the attribute "Ahmad." Now, when we look back on the lives of former prophets, we find among many others Jesus Christ of Nazareth who exhibited in his person the attributes of humility and tenderness, denoted by the name "Ahmad." Hence the claim of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad that he was "like unto Jesus the son of Mary"—like in spirit and character.

But the Mirza's claim went further. From the New Testament it appears that Jesus Christ had foretold his second advent. It is quite possible that this expectation of his second advent in the Gospels may have been due to the common practice of antiquity, according to which people used to wait for the reappearance at some later more

opportune time of their popular heroes, who had died leaving their work incomplete. But the similarity of this expectation to the custom of antiquity is no conclusive proof that Jesus made no such prophecy of second advent. This is a kind of jumping to conclusions which to me appears to be unjustifiable. The tradition is, on the contrary, traceable to the times of the Apostles and appears, therefore, to be a genuine prophecy. If the prophecy may be accepted, then, as genuine, Jesus at any rate could not mean that he would return in his own person, for such a return would have been against his own principles. According to him, a person who had once died could not return to life (Lk. xvi, 31). Jesus himself explained that John the Baptist had come in the power and spirit of Elias (Mtt. xi, 14; xvii, 12, 13; Lk. i, 17), although the old Jewish tradition clearly stated that Elijah had gone up to heaven bodily in a 'chariot of fire' (2 Kings ii, 11). If then Jesus had prophesied about his second advent, he must have meant that some one in his power and spirit would rise to fight the evils and corruptions which Christianity would have introduced into the pure religion preached by him, and which evils and corruptions he called by the general name of "Anti-Christ." The Christians have, however, always believed in his personal return, and quite in conformity with the practice of antiquity early invented the myth of his corporeal ascension to heaven in clouds (Acts i, 9-10), so that the identity of person may not be destroyed.

A similar tradition, although different in several respects, has also existed among the Muslims. In the Holy Quran there is not a single word about the second advent of Jesus. With analogies I am not here concerned. Indeed, verse 117 of Sura 5 of the Holy Quran not only

states the fact of the natural death of Jesus, and also excludes every possibility of his return in person. There are, however, many sayings reported from the Holy Prophet Muhammad, which contain clear prophecies about the second advent of Jesus. These sayings are considerable in number and are contained in books of very great authority such as *e g.* the collection of Bukhari. But these Sayings also show that the Holy Prophet made a clear distinction between the Jesus of Nazareth and the Promised Messiah. The one, that of Nazareth, had curly hair and white complexion, while the other had straight hair and brown complexion. Further he said that the Promised Messiah will be an Imam of the Muslims, who shall rise from their own midst. The personal return of Jesus was, therefore, quite out of the question. The Holy Prophet has also thrown light on the mission of the Promised Messiah. His prophetic eye had seen to what misfortunes and to what abysses of degradation the Muslims would fall one day. He had seen that their political power would one day be gone from them and that they would be much harassed by Christianity. "What would your condition be," he had said, "when the son of Mary rises in your midst, and he will be your Imam from among yourselves!" The mission of the Promised Messiah was to fight the "Anti-Christ."* What this Anti-Christ means is explained by

** I use this word Anti-Christ, because it is so popular. The Arabic word is Dajjal which is defined in Muntaha'l Arab as follows : The edge of the sword ; a great multitude ; gold ; the goldening fluid or the brilliance of gold ; liar ; deceiver ; the title of the false Messiah who shall appear in the latter days and shall claim to be God. Here all the externals of modern European Civil-*

another saying of the Holy Prophet, which declares that those who often recite the first ten verses, or according to another reporter, the last ten verses of Sura *Al-Kahf* (ch. 18) of the Holy Quran shall not suffer from the mischief of the Anti-Christ. Now, in the first of these passages the doctrine that Jesus is the son of God and in the last the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus are condemned. Along with the doctrine of the divinity, the last passage (verse 104) also condemns the materialism that arises from pride in scientific achievements and technological skill: "they think that they are well-versed in skill of the work of hands." Anti-Christ, then, according to the Holy Prophet, meant corrupted modern Christianity, which as a proof of its truth points in the Eastern countries to the materialistic achievements of Europe, and which as a system of faith with all its irrational dogmas is quite the reverse of what Jesus had taught. One thing is worth noticing here. The verses, which speak of Christianity and technology in the same breath, were revealed at a time when Christian nations had no special reputation for technology, and technology and mass production had not given birth to materialism. In fact, the Germanic race, to which alone belongs the credit for the development of modern technology, had yet hardly emerged from savagery. It was first during the Nineteenth Century that Christian nations earned their

zation, namely, its wars, its inventions of ever new engines of destruction ; its wealth and greed for more wealth ; its brilliant exterior ; its diplomatic lies and deceptions ; its claim to perfection and to being the only legitimate object of human endeavour (i. e. its claim to being God) as well as the doctrines of Trinity and the divinity of Jesus. These signs of the days when the Messiah would come are known almost universally among the Muslims and the literature on the point is immense.

great reputation for technical skill. This circumstance is not only a proof of the prophetic character of the Holy Quran, but also, when considered in the light of the Prophet's Saying quoted above, points to the time when the Promised Messiah ought to appear, whose mission was to be to withstand the onslaughts of modern Christianity and its ally materialism. The Holy Prophet also said, "He *i. e.* the Promised Messiah, will break the Cross," which leaves no room whatever for doubt as to his mission. When Mirza Ghulam Ahmad advanced his claim to being the Promised Messiah, he made this very clear, when he said, "As light has been bestowed upon me to dispel the darkness of Christianity, with reference to this circumstance I have been given the name of "Son of Mary." As to whether he fulfilled this mission or not, we shall be able to decide when we come to take an estimate of his work.

The question may well be asked, why it was that he met with so much opposition in the face of such clear prophecies. To answer this question, one must throw a glance over the history of the corruptions of Islam, which would carry us far beyond the limits we have out of obvious necessity imposed upon ourselves in this essay. It is enough to remark here that these corruptions had begun as early as the second century of Islam during Abbaside Khilafat, when the Companions of the Holy Prophet and the children and grand-children of these Companions had all passed away. Leaving aside matters which do not come within the purview of our subject, all the traditions that had been developed among the Jews about the Messiah, and which had already been adopted by the Christians, were now taken over by the

Muslim peoples. The Jews had been expecting a war-like Messiah who should restore the kingdom of Israel. Contrary to their expectations, Jesus declared that his kingdom was not of this world. All the same, the Christians retained or re-adopted the old Jewish tradition, with this difference that they relegated the restoration of the kingdom to the time of the second advent. The Musalmans took up the tradition of the Jews as well as the Christians, added some ideas from themselves, and before long evolved a tradition of their own. It was this: The man who died on the Cross was not Jesus at all, but a different person, or perhaps the person who had sold him for thirty pieces of silver, on whom God had thrown the likeness of Jesus, so that he should suffer for his perfidy to his master and the master himself be saved. It was a case of killing two birds with one stone. Mosheim speaks in his *Kirchengeschichte des Christentums* of a Christian sect in the early centuries of Christianity who held similar views. That Jesus himself was carried alive and lodged in the fourth heaven from fear of the Jews. The source of 'carrying alive' is the Christian tradition, and the 'fourth heaven' is a reminiscence of the Grand Vision or spiritual Ascension of the Holy Prophet, during which he saw Jesus on the fourth heaven. That Jesus will come bodily down from heaven in the latter days (Christian tradition) and adopt the Islamic faith. This adoption of the Islamic faith reminds one of what the Holy Prophet had once said that if Jesus or Moses were alive in his day, they would have to follow him. That Christ would then take up his sword, kill the Anti-Christ (an ugly man riding an enormous donkey), convert all the world to Islam by force and then reign for forty years, after which the world would come to

end. This tradition has ruled the Musalman peoples for centuries, with few exceptions. The wide-spread havoc and destruction of property, life and literature in the lands of Islam in the Thirteenth Century at the hands of the Mongols had brought about the age of darkness over Islam. We should not then be surprised if we find this vulgar tradition turned into a matter of belief in that age of barrenness of thought among the Muslims, which followed the Mongol invasion.

In an atmosphere surcharged with such traditions the claim of the Mirza to being the Promised Messiah was a thunderclap that shook the people out of their quiet. He exposed the hollowness of the received tradition with an array of powerful arguments which could not be answered. He based his arguments upon the Holy Qaran and the Sayings of the Holy Prophet. He quoted verses upon verses from the Holy Quran to show that Jesus had died a natural death and could not come back. Jesus had not died on the Cross,* he said, although it was he

**His argument was based exactly on the verse which was supposed to lend support to the opposite view. The verse in question is habitually translated wrong, and for this reason I intend to explain it at length and in the light of the following verse which is often left out in discussions. The passage reads as follows: "And their saying, surely we have killed the Messiah Jesus son of Mary, the opposite of Allah; and they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but the matter was made dubious to them, and most surely those who differ therein are only in a doubt about it; they have no knowledge respecting it, but only follow a conjecture, and they know it not for sure; nay! Allah exalted him in His presence; and Allah is Mighiy, Wise. And there is not one of the followers of the Book but most surely believes in this before his death, and on the day of Judgment he shall be a witness against them." (iv, 157—159). The verses mean that Jesus was not killed on the Cross nor in*

(Jesus) himself and nobody else who had been put on the Cross. From the Cross, Jesus had escaped alive, and had taken refuge in some distant land where

any other violent manner, that the whole affair was doubtful to his contemporaries and there was no certainty whatever about the fact of his death on the Cross, that God had exalted him, and that although the matter was so utterly doubtful, yet every Jew believes that they did kill him and the Christians have erected their whole dojma upon this doubtful fact, and that Jesus will bear witness against them on the day of Judgment. According to the Mosaic law, he that is hanged is accursed of God (Deut. xxi, 23) and accordingly the Christians believe that Jesus went down to Hell and remained there for three days (Acts ii, 27, 31; Eph. iv, 9, and 1 Peter iii, 19). The Holy Quran repudiates this calumny against Jesus and says that God exalted him instead and that Jesus will accuse them of this injustice on the day of Judgment. That Jesus did not die on the Cross is apparent from many considerations. His own contemporaries were not sure of his death. The governor Pilate ' marvelled ' (Mk. xv, 44). The fact is that the couple of hours he was on the Cross were not enough to bring about death. Death usually followed from hunger and exhaustion and not from physical injuries, and cases are on record of persons having recovered, who had been on the Cross for more than twenty-four hours. The two felons, who were hanged beside him, were taken down alive. That Jesus was also alive is shown by the flowing of blood when his side was pierced. The two felons were buried, but he was given into the charge of a wealthy disciple, who lavished care upon him and put him in a spacious room hewn in the side of a rock. Modern European scholars are almost unanimous in their opinion that the postcrucifixion appearances of Jesus were all ghostly and not in flesh and blood. This opinion is quite fantastic and finds no support from the Gospels. For if he had risen only in spirit, where was the necessity of removing the stone from the mouth of the cave, and why did he disguise himself as a gardener (Jn. xv, 15)? The disguise was so perfect that two of his own disciples who travelled by his side to Galilee could not recognise him for a long time. And if he was on the eve of leaving for heaven, why did he go all the way to Galilee? Was that a station on the way to heaven? The fact is that he was afraid of being

he continued his prophetic work. In any case, he had not ascended to heaven, which was an unnatural thing. According to the Holy Quran, he had died a natural death, and therefore, could not come back. For the satisfaction of the Christian controversialists, he turned to the Gospels themselves to prove that no such thing as bodily ascension had taken place. For it should

*recognised. He was afraid lest the High Priest should get wind of his being still alive, and he enjoined strict secrecy upon those who had recognised him. Word was sent secretly to his disciples to meet him at Galilee. He is afraid of showing himself at Jerusalem. If he was only a spirit, why all these precautions? He feels hunger like and living mortal and eats (Lk. xxiv, 43; Jn. xxi, 5—14). Once, indeed, the disciples doubted, but he rebuked them and said, "Behold my hands and my feet that it is I myself, handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see me have" (Lk. xxiv, 39). The theory of ghostly appearances is based on the supposition that he had died. It is like putting the cart before the horse. For we ought to utilise the details of his postcrucifixion appearances to ascertain whether he had died or not. These appearances are in flesh and blood; Jesus repudiates indignantly the idea of being taken for a spirit. From these appearances it is apparent that he had not died. Instead of basing the theory of ghostly appearances on the supposition of his death, we ought first to prove his death, which in itself is an improbability. And if we reject the supposition of death, the whole thing becomes clear and natural, hence the Holy Quran contends that he did not die on the Cross, although it appeared to the people that he had died, but they were not at all sure about it, and that although the matter was so doubtful, yet they have built a whole line of dogmas upon it! Here is another evidence that the Holy Prophet received his knowledge from God, and not from any man, for in his day the Christian dogma was well established, and no man had dared argue the other way about. It needs only to be added that the word *Salab* in the Quran can only be applied for death on the Cross, which is negatived by the Quran, and not for mere hanging on the Cross. The Quran, therefore, negatives the idea of death on the Cross and not mere hanging on it.*

be remembered that of the four Gospels, Matthew and John know nothing whatever as to what happened to him after his escape from the Cross. He just disappears. The last twelve verses of Mark, in which his ascension is spoken of, are a later addition, as the Revised (English) Version of the Bible shows. The remaining two references, one in the third Gospel and the other in Acts, are from the same person Luke, who was no eye-witness, and who wrote from mere tradition (Lk. i, 1-3). Such flimsy evidence for such a tremendous occurrence is utterly inadequate.

Within the limited space at my disposal it is not possible to give even a small fraction of the large array of arguments the Mirza advanced to overthrow the old vulgar tradition and to support his own claim. Nor is it necessary to do so, for my purpose is only to present an understandable account of himself and his movement. Readers who are not interested in the question of Jesus as understood in Islam will find an excellent discussion of many important questions in Maulana Muhammad Ali's "Muhammad and Christ." For discussion with the Christian missionaries and for a good understanding of the subject for its own sake, this book is indispensable. We will now pass on to a brief review of the remaining years of the life of the Mirza.

It was in 1890 that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad proclaimed that it had been revealed to him that he was the Promised Messiah. The announcement was met with an opposition and persecution that have been the privilege of only the greatest men. No small man was ever persecuted. The distinction is reserved only for the great. It is no easy task to champion a new idea or bring back into life

an old one that had died and been forgotten long ago. The easy complacencies of the people, their fond notions, their age-long prejudices, their dogmas and their superstitions the Reformer denounces and presents new moral values which are above their understanding. The people cling passionately to what they and their fore-fathers have held as the highest good, and he denounces it as passionately as false and foolish. They desire to hold on to the past ; he wants them to move forward. Here they were looking for a warlike Messiah and a blood-thirsty Mahdi who should fill the earth with blood. They found instead a plain man, whose humility was boundless, whose pliteness of disposition knew no limits, whose patience, whose forbearance in the face of a relentless persecution exceeded comprehension, who could bear to be abused in the face and return it with a smile, and who, with all his greatness, never let any one feel that he was greater than him. They wanted to see the flash of the sword and to hear the clash of arms. They found instead nothing more dreadful than the squeeking of a reed-pen. Reformers generally meet with bitterest opposition from vested interests. And in India vested interests were plenty. Where learning is rare, where ignorance and illiteracy stalk in the land, there finds superstition a happy breeding place, and there find themselves men who are willing to exploit the ignorance of the people. There are thousands of them still in India, who ply their nefarious trade in circles that have not yet come under the spell of the Ahmadia Movement. They constitute themselves into religious leaders and prey upon the credulity of the people, and their only stock in trade is a little more learning than their fellows possess. It is this variety of the *Ulama*, who have been

the pests of Muslim lands during the last few centuries, and it was from this class that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad met with the bitterest opposition. If he too had put himself in this class and started exploiting the people, they would have been his staunch supporters. But the worst of it was that he had no private axe of his own to grind. He wanted every one to be independent and think for himself. He desired to bring back the old Islam of the days of Muhammad. "Back to Muhammad" was his cry day and night. Well could the poet Iqbal say that if one wanted to see a picture of the true old Islamic culture, one ought to go to Qadian, the home of Mirza. It was his sincerity, his whole-hearted devotion to the cause of Islam and his deep insight into the true meaning of Islam that was so unpleasant to the self-seeking reactionaries.

It is after all well that the Reformers should be called upon to face persecution, that they should be called upon to show how far they are willing to suffer and what price they are willing to pay for the truth to which they invite all mankind. If they are weak unworthy men, if they are not as tall as they claim to be, if they are impostors and liars, the storm of opposition will tear them up from their roots, and their hollowness will be exposed to the laughter and ridicule of the whole world. Their name will be extinguished and their memory will soon be thrown into oblivion. And the storm that raged over the head of Mirza for eighteen long years would have quaked the heart of any man. Christians, Hindus, Musalmans, Sikhs—the whole country rose like one man to bring him to naught. When his enemies had been defeated one after the other in open controversies, when their peltings

of stones had failed to silence him, when they had spent out their stock of abuse and calumny and slander—the press rang with their shrieks through the length and breadth of India,—they dragged him into law courts (and how he had detested law-courts from his youth) with false accusations. A long row of criminal cases were instituted against him one after the other, and all of them fall to the ground. The case brought against him by the Christian Missionaries* in 1897 was the most serious of them all and was planned on a large scale. They concocted a great conspiracy in which Christians, Musalmans and Hindus all took part. The accusation of attempted Murder was brought against him. The prosecutor was one Dr. Henry Martyn Clarke

* *Maulvi Muhammad Ali, in his "Ahmadia Movement" notices this case as follows: The charge against the Promised Messiah was that he had sent a young man named Abdul Hamid to Amritsar with instructions to murder Dr. Clarke. The statement made by Dr. Clarke was supported by his subordinates. Other Communities also gave help in the prosecution. The Muslims were represented by Maulvi Muhammad Husain of Batala who came to give evidence for the prosecution while the President of the Arya Samaj offered his services as counsel to lead the case for the prosecution free of charge. Thus three nations made a common cause against one man and thousands looked with expectant eyes to the day when the sentence would be pronounced against him. But the Magistrate saw with a keen sight that the mass of evidence against the accused was mostly a fabrication, and on further enquiry he found such to be the case. Some weeks before the institution of the proceedings, the Promised Messiah had seen a vision to the effect that lightning came down upon his house, but it did no harm. Along with it were the words: "This is nought but a threatening from the authorities." In the course of the proceedings other revelations were received foretelling his clearance from the charge. All these revelations are published on the title-page of Kitab-ul-Bariyyat. The case, though to all appearance a very serious one, ended in accordance with these revelations.*

of the Church Missionary Society. The President of the Arya Samaj, a lawyer of standing, offered to lead the case for the prosecution free of charge. But the magistrate was not long in seeing through the fraud. He found that the conspiracy was the last gasping and despicably base effort of a dying enemy who had been defeated in open battle and had no more strength for honourable fight. The case was dismissed. Disappointed in their efforts to bring him to disgrace through law-courts, his enemies adopted others and still baser methods. They began to fill the ears of the authorities with strange tales. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, they said, was in secret correspondence with the Amir of Afghanistan, and that it was agreed between them that when the Amir invaded the country from outside, his followers should suddenly rise in revolt in the land. An officer came with a police force, which threw a cordon round his house. But when the officer came into the presence of the Mirza, his suspicions vanished, and he himself fell a victim to the holiness of the man. For eighteen long years the Mirza was tried and subjected to every kind of annoyance. But did he give way? Did he show any moment of weakness? The Mirza's heart was dead to all fear. There was no faltering in him and no doubting. With a rock-like faith in the righteousness and justice of his own cause, with an unshakable trust in the protecting arm of the Almighty, he stepped forth to face the enmity of whole India. With his back to the wall, he fought like a wounded lion, and showed a steadfastness and resolution that won the admiration even of his enemies. The storm of opposition called forth a most furious activity on his part, and the last eighteen years of his life were the most productive. He went lecturing from place to place, met the challenges of controversy and wrote many books.

Within the limited space at my disposal it is not possible to go into details of such an extraordinarily busy life. I will content myself with just a few facts. And first of all the great service he rendered to science in 1895. Sikhism is an Indian religion with a following of about two millions. The founder of this faith, Guru Baba Nanak, had been originally an Hindu who lived early in the Sixteenth Century. Early in his youth he learnt the Holy Quran, became a Muslim, said prayers like Muslims and associated very largely with the Muslim Sufis. Later he wandered in the land, argued with the Hindus and remonstrated with them to give up idol worship and other heathenish ways and invited them to the worship of the One Invisible God. It is very probable that he also made a pilgrimage to Mecca. As the sect consists mostly of illiterate peasants and village artisans, the Sikhs have never shown any literary capacity, and with the exception of their sacred hymns and a few biographies in which it is difficult to distinguish fact from fable, they possess no literature. Consequently information about the beginnings of this faith is very meagre. We are left to conjecture that on Nanak's death, some one stepped into his shoes as his successor in keeping with the practice of the Sufis. That Nanak had no intention whatever of founding a new religion is shown by the fact that nearly a century later, the Order consisted of only about five persons. But the then head of the Order transformed it into a sect. He was the fifth in line and the first to institute propaganda and levy contributions. As Nanak had himself worked among the Hindus and his successors and followers were all recruited from the ranks of Hinduism, in course of time Sikhism began to look as if

it were a sect of Hinduism. At present, all the social usages of the Sikhs are those of Hinduism, and to all appearances they are Hindus. But there are certain peculiarities in their religion which prove without a shadow of doubt that the origin of this religion is from Islam, and that it cannot be termed a sect of Hinduism. The different sects of Hinduism are either atheistic, polytheistic, pantheistic, animistic or dualistic, and the majority of them are characterised by idolworship. In direct opposition to all these, the Sikhs eschew idol-worship in all forms, and are strict monotheists. There is yet another distinction. The division of people into castes is one of the distinctive features of Hinduism, so much so that the rule may be laid down which admits of no exception that there is no Hinduism without caste system. The loss of caste is the greatest misfortune that can befall a Hindu, for it puts him out of society, deprives him of the protection of law and of the consolations of religion and makes his existence altogether miserable. Over against this, in Sikhism there are no castes. These distinctions, *viz.* prohibition of idol worship, absence of caste system and a strict monotheistic faith, are fundamental. They put Sikhism out of the pale of Hinduism and bring it within the fold of Islam. The sacred book of the Sikhs is called *Granth*. It is a collection of hymns composed by the founder, to which many more were added by his eight successors. The hymns composed by the tenth Guru Gobind Singh are not included in the book. The hymns ascribed to Nanak are in part translations and adaptations of poems by Muslim Sufis. (1) A study of this sacred book reveals the

(1) Dr. Barrett, in his '*The Heart of India*', remarks that the conception of God in the *Granth* is a reminiscence of the phallic worship of the *Siwa* cult of the Hindus. The author

fact that the conception of God (1) presented in this book is, compared with the different religions of the world, nearest to that of Islam. Accordingly, and in view of the personal life and doings of Nanak one cannot but conclude that Sikhism is but an off-shoot of Islam. The Promised Messiah made a thorough study of the subject and published results of his researches in his *Sat Bachan*. It was in connection with these researches that he made an important discovery, which solved the problem and proved it beyond doubt that the founder of Sikhism was a Muslim by faith. I give here the discovery in the words of Maulana Muhammad Ali: "In September 1895, he undertook a very important journey to Dera Baba Nanak, a village in the Gurdaspur District. The circumstances which led to this journey and the important result to which it gave birth are fully related in the *Sat Bachan*, which was written soon afterwards. At Dera Nanak is preserved a *Chola*, which is a relic of Guru Nanak himself

bases his argument upon an English translation of the Sikh scriptures and seems to be ignorant of the Punjabi idiom, in which the book is written. It is a peculiarity of this language that its love songs are always addressed by the female to the male and not the other way about, as is customary in other languages; probably because the devotion of the female coupled with her physical helplessness lends greater pathos to poetry, than it does with the male. Hence the passionate songs of Nanak, in which the singer supposes himself to be a woman who is pouring out her heart for the absence of her beloved, whereas it is the saint who is bewailing his distance from the Source of all Light and Love—God.

(1) *The author of Siyar-ul-Mutakhkharin, who gives him the remarkable name of Fakir Nanak Shah, states with such confidence as if the fact were never doubted, that "Fakir Nanak Shah translated Muslim Sufi poems and composed some of his own." He also says that Guru Gobind Singh ordered his followers to grow long hair in imitation of a Muslim order of Sufis.*

and which is in the custody of his descendants. It is a long cloak with short sleeves and is made of brown cloth. A tradition in the Sakhi of Bhai Bala, more commonly known as Angad's Sakhi, states that the *Chola* was sent down to Nanak from heaven and that upon it were written the words of nature in Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Hindi and Sanskrit. It is reasonable to conclude from this tradition that either the writing on the *Chola* had been revealed to Nanak, in which case the words would be spoken of as having come down from heaven, or possibly the *Chola* may have been the gift of some person whom Nanak took for his spiritual guide. Upon Nanak's death the *Chola* passed to his first successor Angad and thus to successive Gurus till the time of the fifth Guru Arjan Das. In his time the *Chola* was won by one Tola Ram in recognition of some great service done. After some time it fell into the hands of Kabli Mal, a descendant of Nanak, and since then it has remained in the hands of his descendants at Dera Nanak. On account of the high repute and sanctity in which the *Chola* was held by the followers of Nanak, the practice became at an early date of offering coverings to protect it from wear and tear. The mystery which hung about the *Chola* became deeper by the increased number of coverings which hid it altogether from the eye of the worshipper. Only a part of the sleeve was shown, but by constant handling the letters on that part had become quite obscure. The founder of the Ahmadiya Movement had already come to the conclusion that Guru Nanak was in fact a true Muslim, and therefore he thought of solving the mystery about the *Chola* also. Accordingly, on the 30th of September 1895 he set off to Dera Nanak with some of his friends. By special arrangements made with the guardian of the *Chola*, the

numerous coverings, mostly of silk or of fine cloth, were taken off, and the actual writing on the *Chola* was brought to light. It contained nothing but the verses of the Holy Quran which were copied at once. This wonderful disclosure of the writing on the *Chola* showed clearly that Nanak was a true Muslim at heart, because otherwise he could not wear a cloak with such words on it as that "the true religion with God is the faith of Islam!" The result was published in a book called the *Sat Bachan*, and though the orthodox Sikhs, who are more inclined to Hinduism than Islam, were greatly excited at the appearance of the book, yet the truth of the statements made in it concerning the *Chola* has never been questioned."

In December of the following year he read his famous lecture* on the Philosophy of Islam in the Great Religious Conference held at Lahore. The convener of this conference, who was a Hindu, had proposed the following five questions to be discussed by the champions of the different religions in the light of the teachings of their faiths and their sacred scriptures. (i) The physical, moral and spiritual conditions of man. (ii) The state of man in the after-life. (iii) The real object of the existence of man and the means of its attainment. (iv) The effect of actions in the present life and the life to come, and (v) the Sources of Divine knowledge. The paper read by the Promised Messiah was universally adjudged to be the best that was read at the Conference.

I have already mentioned above that he had started in 1888 to build up a community around him in order to prepare them for the work of the propagation of Islam. When

*An English translation of this lecture by Maulana Muhammad Ali under the title "*The Teachings of Islam by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad*" is also available.

two years later, on his claiming to be the Promised Messiah, a great opposition broke out against him, his enemies, far from extinguished the light he had lighted, helped only to spread his fame wider, and number of his followers increased by leaps and bounds. They were to be found in all parts of India and were to be counted by the thousand. The Nineties of the Century were coming to a close, and arrangements for the Decennial Census were afoot, when the idea occurred to him to find out the exact number of his followers. With this intention he issued in 1900 a circular to his followers to inscribe themselves in the Census records, as Ahmadi Muslims. He explained in the circular that the designation 'Ahmadia' was not after his own name which was Ghulam Ahmad, and that it was after the name 'Ahmad' of the Holy Prophet of Islam, and that it was chosen because he had founded the community in the spirit of humility and sympathy and good-will denoted by the name Ahmad, of which he was the manifestation. The idea of making a sect was farthest from his mind. I will come back to this question in section VII of this essay, where I have dealt with his attitude towards sectarianism. Here I want only to emphasise the fact that he named the community after the name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and not after his own name, and that it was done without any intention to create a new sect and in connection with quite a non-religious occasion.

I will close this brief sketch of his uncommonly busy life with the mention of his last great public act, which, if the people of India had acted upon the spirit in which it was done, would have saved the country much unhappiness and brought it far nearer to the realisation of the aim which it is striving after than it is to-day, namely a more

honourable place in the comity of nations. I refer to his "Message of Peace." He had been done almost to death by his fellow countrymen. They had left no means untried to compass his ruin, and like the valiant man that he was, he had beaten them all and himself come out victorious from the conflict. But all the time he pitied their ignorance and his heart burned for the love of them. "They abuse me and I pray for them. I feel nothing but pity for them, for I have no anger in me." Arya Samaj and the Christian Missions had done their utmost to throttle the movement he had started. They were trying to wipe out the name of Islam from India. And he, the greatest champion of Islam alive, could not endure the idea. Yet he desired that the country should live a life of unity and mutual good-will. Religious controversies there always will be, but he desired to remove their poison fangs. With this purpose in view, he prepared a paper called the *Paigham-i-Sulah* (the Message of Peace) in which he made among others the proposal that the representatives of the different religions in India should make an agreement between themselves to the effect that the followers of no religion should abuse or say anything derogatory to the honour of other faiths and their founders, that there ought to reign mutual good-will and tolerance between the different religions, and that the founders of all religions, whichever those religions might be, should be revered. It was indeed the central principle of a universal religious toleration, for want of which India is going to the dogs to-day. Armed with these proposals he went down to Lahore in April 1908. Opposition had by now very much subsided and his speeches were listened to with great interest both by the leading Hindus and Musalmans. His booklet about Hindu-Muslim unity was

almost complete, but it was destined that he should not be able to present it to the people in person. At 10 o'clock in the evening of May 25, he suddenly fell ill, and after a short illness of about twelve hours passed away the following morning. Peace and blessings of God be upon him! The news of his death was felt as a shock throughout India. The *Vakil* of Amritsar, a conservative paper, announced his death in the following words: "The man, who for thirty years has been a storm and an earth-quake for the religious world, whose two fists were two electric batteries, in whose fingers were entwined the wires of a revolution,—he, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian, has passed away."

THE MAN AND HIS WORK.

And an earthquake certainly he had been, who had shaken the religious world of India for thirty long years. Like all great teachers, he had either intense admirers or intense haters. His name rang through the length and breadth of the country. Wherefrom had this man this power? Without doubt, he was a profound scholar. He wrote Persian and Arabic with the freedom of a native. But in scholarship he did not stand unique nor did he ever claim to be unique. Among his own followers there were many who, in the matter of mere scholarship, had not much to learn from him. Muslim India, in spite of its wide-spread ignorance, had yet great luminaries of learning here and there. There was Maulvi Muhammad Hussain of Batala, his arch-enemy, who had one set of opinions for his private use and another set of quite the opposite opinions to shew to the government. There was Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, a great scholar and political leader, of whom I have already spoken at length. There

was Maulvi Chiragh Ali of Hyderabad, who has left quite a number of scholarly works behind both in Urdu and English. They were all trying to reform Islam and defend Islam against the attacks of other religions. Of the lesser lights I will not speak, but will content myself with the mention of one who was orthodox among the orthodox and modern among the moderns, namely, Maulvi Chiragh Ali of Hyderabad. He may be called the representative of the short-lived school of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. He wrote many books in the defence of Islam. But while defending he lops off some of the most distinctive features of Islam, which, after the process of lopping is finished, leaves behind a religion which is a mere system of faith not much different from Christianity or Buddhism.*

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was none of these. He was no mere scholar and did not derive his strength from scholarship alone. He was a teacher and the source of his authority and strength was his inner enlightenment. Supported by a power of conviction born of his own personal spiritual experience, he stood like a rock in the midst of storms. His methods were certainly scholarly, but the spirit was of one called. He was profoundly

*See, for example, his "*Proposed Political, Legal and Social Reforms under Muslim Rule*" (Bombay, 1883), Introduction, pp. xvii—xviii, where he proposes to sever religion from morals and politics. On p. xxiv he says, "Islam as a religion is quite apart from inculcating a social system. The Mohammadan polity and social system have nothing to do with religion." One may ask, what does remain of Islam, after Ethics, Politics, and social ideas are all removed from it? That he proposes this severance because, as he says, Europe has done the same with regard to Christianity, and because of his awe and veneration before European critics, shows how far the spirit of slavery had entered into his own soul.

conscious and conscious at every moment of his life that he had something to teach and that that something was higher than all philosophies. That was the truth of Islam. "I exerted my thought in every direction ; but no faith did I find like the faith of Muhammad. Myself have I tested Islam : It is Light, and behold ! it is All Light, and to this I call " It was his deep conviction of the truth of Islam, it was his love of God and His Prophet Muhammad, that drove all thoughts of self away and compelled that ceaseless activity on his part. He was, as it were, possessed. He desired all the world to see the beauty of Muhammad and of Islam as he had seen it. Personal injuries never ruffled his temper in the least. He was abused ; he was traduced ; he was pelted with stones. But the idea of revenge never crossed his mind. On the contrary, it pained him to see that people could be so ignorant. Indeed, from his way of life it appeared as if these people did not exist for him. But when any one abused Islam or the Holy Prophet Muhammad as the Arya Samajists and Christian Missionaries were busy doing, then he had no peace. Then it appeared as if a volcano had burst forth releasing pent-up energies destined to carry all before them. Then he would have no rest until he had dictated a reply. And the controversial literature that he produced is packed with arguments, each argument a hammer that pulverises.

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad has left about eighty works, and to know the man that he was, to the fire that raged within his breast, to see how he was being forced and driven along under the lash, as it were, of an inner, all-powerful necessity, the necessity that Truth alone feels

for expression, one must turn to his works, for each of them bears the impress of his personality. He wrote neither to earn money nor fame nor even out of a mere intellectual pleasure. Certainly, he had earned the title of *Sultan-ul-Qalam*, that literary India conferred upon him. But one thing becomes apparent even from a cursory reading of his works. He is not at all concerned about art. It is upon the expression of his meaning that he centers his whole endeavour. Art he sacrifices wholly to the expression of his meaning. When he takes up a question, he thrashes it out from all its aspects. He anticipates all possible questions that may arise in the mind of the reader, for his main effort is not to produce a beautiful work of art, but to explain and convince. Hence those immense foot-notes, and foot-notes to foot-notes, which sometimes, as for instance in the case of the *Barahin*, run to greater length than the book itself. His language is most eloquent, a remarkable circumstance in a man who renounced all art. I will compare him with Abu'l Kalam Azad, who is acknowledged to be the greatest master of Urdu expression to-day. He is very eloquent, indeed; but his eloquence is a never ending flood of beautiful words and expressions, which swamps and deadens the reader's mind but does not enlighten: and his writings are an immense amount of chaff with perhaps a grain of meaning here and there, which often gets lost and is always difficult to find. They provide an excellent intellectual exercise for those who have happily enough time to spare and desire to enrich their vocabularies with choice words and expressions. To a work-a-day man who puts some value upon his time, they are so much purposeless rot, full of annoyance. It is different with Mirza's writing. He never uses two

words where one would do. Also he is not afraid to use several when they are needed. He does not go out of his way to use rare idioms or beautiful expressions and figures of speech as some people do. Inded, he is wholly oblivious of what kind of language he is using. It is an unforced, unaffected natural flow, and what expresses the meaning is to him good. The meaning is the standard and final authority. His language too takes the character of a mountain torrent that flows resistless and tempestuous. It carries you along but never overpowers or drowns you. He explains things to you, is conscious all the while that perhaps the language he is employing is inadequate to clothe the grand truth that is struggling for expression, takes you as it were by the hand, puts you on the road of thought, raises questions on the way and answers them for you, spares you all intellectual effort, until gradually you find yourself in a swing rising higher and ever higher, and then you feel that the next step he brings you to is the one you had already expected, and that what he is telling you is an echo of your own heart. A young man while reading his book *A-ina-i-Kamalat-i-Islam* remarked, "I feel inspiration coming upon me." This is the characteristic of his writings. He does not care to impress you with his own greatness, with his learning or with the profundity of his own thought. He never seeks to surprise you or confound you. All his pains are devoted to one and only one end : to explain to you the truth as he understands it.

It is a common practice among Urdu writers to embellish their writings with quotations of suitable pieces of poetry here and there. In India, this practice has

been carried to a sickening extent, especially by the newspaper writers. The Mirza rarely quotes others people's lines. When he feels in the mood, he breaks forth into his own poetry written then and there and just for the occasion where it stands. These poems are either hymns of praise or adulatory poems about the Holy Prophet Muhammad and his work. As in his prose, so in his poetry, he is ever mindful of his own life work. He himself says, "I have no concern with poets or with poetry. My only object is that perhaps some may understand this way." Let no one infer therefrom that his poetry is merely the verification of a religious zealot. A cursory look through *Durr-i-Samin* (in which all his poetical compositions have been collected from various works) is enough to convince any one that he was no mean poet. His poems bear the same impress of his personality as his prose writings. They breathe a spirit of sincerity and genuineness of feeling that are rare among the poets. Beyond the necessary technique, here too he renounces all art, for his poems, unlike of professional poets, are the productions of genuine feeling rather than of art. His utterances are spontaneous, unforced, and his language simple, of daily speech. Oriental poetry makes far greater use of metaphors and similes than European poetry, and the Mirza too makes frequent use of them, but only to emphasise his meaning. That is his chief concern. But inspite of the extreme simplicity of his language and diction, there is depth of meaning and passion that will not be suppressed. As a poet alone, his work, whether in respect of language or content, can stand comparison with the work of any classical master, with this difference that whereas they wrote for art alone, he made that art subservient to his own great

purpose in life. This is not only Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's great distinction, it also gives the key to his character. In his writings, in his correspondence, in his lectures and table-talks, in his work and in his hours of rest, he never for a moment forgets the purpose he has set before himself. From the day he put himself forward as the Reformer of the age, almost everything vanished from his consciousness except the work he had before him. The work was his life. It had taken entire possession of his being. Otherwise, how can we explain the fact that throughout his public career he is busy day and night to advance the cause he has espoused and is almost dead to everything else? It speaks volumes for the honesty and sincerity of the man. For had he been a liar or a cheat, he would certainly have been found out. It is physically impossible for a person to go on pretending and cheating consistently for a quarter of a century. It is also physically impossible for a person to pursue steadily and passionately only one aim for such a length of time to the entire exclusion of everything else, as the Mirza did, unless that person is divinely called to that work. The purity of Mirza's life, the holiness of his character, and such exclusive devotion to one grand self-less aim of serving Islam and humanity is to me a more than adequate proof of his divine appointment.

The central point of all his work, the pivot around which all his activities turned, was, to use his own words "to offer a rational justification of Islam and to give rational proofs of its truth" (*Barahin*, p. 7). Starting from the general principle that books written in one age are not adequate to meet the requirements of a succeeding age, he goes on to say that whereas the former ages

used to become afflicted with blind traditionalism and a senseless aping of the ancestors and their ways, this our own age suffers from a misuse of intellect. "This new light of our age has blighted the spiritual faculties of our youth." He welcomes the rationalistic tendency of the age, but deplores the fact that due to imperfect understanding and want of sufficient knowledge, this rationalism has become a misguidance instead of guidance. So many different opinions, such variety of ideas are being published, and so much casuistry is being employed that people have become bewildered. Either from want of sufficient understanding and knowledge or from lack of time and opportunities for independent thinking they do not know which opinions to accept and which to reject. And with all that, everybody presumes that he possesses the whole truth. He further deplores the fact that increase of learning, instead of creating humility, has turned the heads of the people; they have become haughty and insolent and have such high conceit of their own selves, that far from becoming enlightened, they become compounds of ignorance. He notes the spread of sceptic ideas and adds that "in this age it is a vain hope to maintain any religion unless it can present rational grounds for its truth.—"(Barahin, pp. 31-34).

Rationality, then, was the corner-stone of his teaching. He welcomed the spirit of the age and went half-way to meet it. Whereas the re-actionary section of contemporary religious teachers suppressed free thought and discouraged enquiry, he encouraged them. His teachings compelled thought. He almost felt injured if any one just took his words and did not weigh them. It was but natural, then, that people who were dissatisfied with things as they were, flocked to him. In his teaching

they found echoes of their own hearts. It was dissatisfaction with religion as propounded by the common type of religious teachers, that drove these men to seek refuge with Mirza. The Holy Prophet's Sayings contain sharp denunciations of the type of religionists that prevails in India even to-day. And the same conditions have prevailed for a long while in almost all Muslim lands, in Egypt, in erstwhile Turkey, and so on. When you go to a Maulvi for enlightenment, and the poor Maulvi finds your questions above his own intelligence or a bit too free, he would immediately denounce you as a *Kafir*, a heathen, an atheist, and what not. The Mirza was called by the same names and many more, and, naturally, truth-seeking spirits found a warm welcome with him. In his rationalistic attitude he took his stand upon the Holy Quran and the Sayings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, and the Quran and the Prophet both appeal to reason. They demand unfettered thought. The attitude of Islam towards religion is wholly rationalistic. And one of the greatest services of Mirza is that he revived this true teaching of Islam and set the minds free from the trammels of an unthinking traditionalism.

But Mirza's rationalism was not that narrow rationalism so common with the scientists. Rationalism, so-called, builds its edifice upon pure reason. He, on the contrary, contended that reason alone was not a sure guide in matters of religion; it should be supplemented by personal experience. Revelation, for instance, can neither be conclusively proved nor disproved by pure reason. To convince oneself of its reality and to know its nature one ought oneself to have revelation. It is its own proof. The same is the case with many other religious postulates. Reason and experience are two complimentary source of

knowledge. Reason guides and experience enlightens reason itself. Without a well-trained mind, one is likely to misunderstand and misinterpret experience, and without experience, reason is an uncertain guide. Like the scientific rationalists in whose footsteps he was walking, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan depended altogether upon such light as his own reason, unaided by experience, afforded. He was, therefore, led to deny revelation and the efficiency of prayer. The Mirza brought a much vaster intellect to bear upon these problems, which intellect was, besides, supported and supplemented by his inner enlightenment and spiritual experience. It was this circumstance that kept his rationalism from floundering in the bogs of scepticism.

But Mirza Ghulam Ahmad not only denied the right of pure reason to be the final judge of the truth or otherwise of the postulates of religion, he also contested the adequacy of Philosophy as a principle of life. Philosophy explains; it does not teach. It may establish the necessity of the existence of God, but it does not give that conviction, that certainty, which alone can form the foundation of a practical life. That positive certainty and conviction Revelation or religious experience alone can offer. Besides, religion is no more intellectual agreement to the truth or otherwise of certain propositions. It is a code of life; it supplies motives for men's actions, it supplies that driving, propelling power that makes for progress. And Philosophy lacks that force.

To put it briefly, the Mirza sought a middle path between that uncritical religiosity, that leads to superstition, on the one side, and a dry Philosophy, which sooner or later ends in atheism or *quasi*-atheism, on the other. Religion, whose teachings do not agree with

the dictates of reason, cannot expect any one to follow those teachings and is likely sooner or later to degenerate to magic-craft and superstition. Religion ought to be rational, and Islam, being from its very nature rational, meets this requirement in the highest degree. It is truth and ought not to be afraid of free enquiry and independent thought. On the contrary, it is from free and independent enquiry and thought that it derives one of its chief supports, the other being the continuation of the gift of revelation in Islam. Weighing, considering and the application of reason nourish Islam. How wrong, how very harmful and contrary to the teachings of Islam is the conduct of those, then, who deny this freedom of thought to the Muslims and presume to themselves the sole right of exegesis? But this reason ought to be exercised in humility. Religion should be lived and the light of reason perfected through the life of practice. Hasty denials of religious ideas, which are not apparently irrational and the incorrectness of which cannot be proved conclusively and beyond doubt, are not justifiable. Hasty denials are, besides, harmful, inasmuch as they affect our conduct, and close the avenues of experience, which could alone justify or falsify our *a priori* deductions. Above all, religion is no mere intellectual acceptance of dogmas, but a positive code of life, which should guide us in our dealings and actions.

The Promised Messiah thus revived what Islam in its original purity had taught, namely, that there is and ought to be a harmony between religion and science, though there is an apparent opposition between them, that the two are only different and independent sources of knowledge, which employ different methods, but that they should work hand in hand, in close co-operation with

one another, that they should supplement one another and together work for the service and advancement of man. The two are, indeed, so closely bound together even in realms of spirituality, that a separation seems to be well-nigh impossible. It is a great truth which has been neglected more often by religionists than by the scientists, and its neglect has always been followed by painful consequences to society as well as to religion. By the enunciation of this long-forgotten principle, the Mirza solved two problems with which Islam in India was faced, namely, irreligiousness and scepticism on one side, and superstition on the other. His teaching freed the people from the clutches of greedy Mullas once for all. But that was only one part of his work. It was not only the canker of blind traditionalism that was eating into the heart of the Muslim people ; Islam was at the same time being subjected to persistent and relentless attacks by Christianity as well as by Arya Samaj, the Musalman religious leaders were, no doubt, doing their best to defend Islam from these attacks. The attitude of these champions of Islam, however, whether of the old school or of the new (that of Sir Syed) had been throughout defensive. It was reserved for Mirza Ghulam Ahmad to turn the tables and carry the war right into the enemy's own camp. He was dissatisfied with the polemic literature of his times, and it was this dissatisfaction, which had in the first instance led him to undertake the compilation of his great epoch-making work, the *Barahin*. In his own polemics, two things stand out clearly, which distinguish him from other controversialists of his day. He never takes an unfair advantage of the faulty expression of his adversary, but seeks on the contrary to know what he really means. He never twists other people's words, as controversialists often do ; his quarrel is not

with words or their arrangement in the speech of the enemy. He is not so anxious to defeat his opponent as to reach the truth. Truth and not victory is his main concern. Secondly, he does not care to attack or defend doctrines or practices singly and by themselves. He first builds the foundations, enunciates basic principles, marshalls his forces with a most consummate skill, and having entrenched himself in the base, he commands the whole territory around and ousts the enemy from all strategic positions with perfect ease. As I have already pointed out, the Mirza was ever conscious of his life mission. Accordingly we find that even in the hour of battle, he does not forget that his purpose is to teach and not to win victories. He utilises these conflicts rather to a higher purpose, and in the heat of the controversy brings out principles of a lasting value. The result is that, while the productions of his opponents were the children of the hour, that died and have been buried long since, his contribution to controversial literature possess enduring worth, and promise to last as long as the Urdu language lasts.

The Mirza took part in many controversies and wrote much on the comparative study of religions. Neither the Brahmo Samajists nor the Arya Samajists, neither the reactionary fanatics among the Musalmans nor the so-called rationalists of the school of Sir Syed escaped his castigations. But the work of the Promised Messiah had special reference to Christianity, which has been for ages the most determined enemy of Islam, and which had derived considerable strength from some of the false notions current among the Muslims themselves, as explained in part IV of this essay. Early in his public

career he had established some fundamental principles on which all religious controversies should be based. They were among others the following : (i) Rationality is the first requirement that a book which claims to be revealed should fulfil; if its teachings are unacceptable to human reason, it cannot be the word of God. (ii) Nature is the work of God, and a revealed book is word. The work and word of God ought to be in agreement and not in conflict with one another. (iii) The revealed word of God ought to give us full and clear knowledge about God Himself. (iv) It should be free from defects ; that is, its teachings ought to be above suspicion that one may follow it with confidence, and one is not compelled to pick and choose, as one has to do with the Bible, etc., etc. The Promised Messiah did not stop at fundamentals. He went further and exposed the groundlessness of all the popular dogmas of Christianity. Paul says in 1 Cor. xv, 14-19, " And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised. And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." This is a fair statement of dogmatic Christianity. The Mirza denied the whole doctrine of atonement as propounded in Christianity. There is no original sin and it cannot be atoned for by the execution of an innocent third person. Also Jesus did not rise from the dead ; his so-called rising was only a recovery from wounds, which he had suffered on the Cross, and he had not died on the

Cross. Jesus did not go to heaven in body, because a corporeal ascension to heaven is not possible. Also there is no physical heaven where a person might bodily migrate to and live there for centuries in body with all physical requirements. Besides, for what purpose was God keeping him there, seeing that in his first advent he had been such a failure? The doctrine of atonement is also immoral, as it brands mankind with natural depravity and corruption, and proves God to be unjust and cruel. He could not subscribe to Christian Ethics. The moral teachings of the Gospels are impracticable, in places even suicidal. As to loving one's enemy and blessing the sinful, it is a misuse of the word love. For love compels one to identify oneself with the object of one's love, and one can not and ought not to do so with the wicked. One ought rather to pity, and out of pity take necessary steps, pleasant or unpleasant as the occasion demands, to wean the wicked from their wickedness. But pity and love are not the same thing. And so on, and so on.

These controversies went on raging for several years, and when the Christians saw themselves humbled on every field, they attempted to bring about his ruin through a trumped-up case, which, however, as already mentioned, fell to the ground. The Christian missionaries were so hard pressed, that they felt compelled to issue a circular among their preachers not to enter into any controversy with the followers of Mirza. And I can say from my personal experience in India, that when a Christian preacher finds that the person he is arguing with is an Ahmadi, he will immediately stop discussion with the words. "We are forbidden to argue with Ahmadis." The Ahmadis have a characteristic way of arguing with Christians. Men of little learning, but who possess some

acquaintance with the works of the Promised Messiah or with the Ahmadia literature in general, have often put the Christian missionaries to flight. Is it not a sufficient proof that the Mirza had broken the Cross and thereby substantiated his claim to the Promised Messiah ?

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had immense success in his life work, a much greater success, indeed, than the one, whose like in spirit and power he claimed to be, ever had. His vast learning, his untrammelled freedom of thought, his piercing and comprehensive intellect, his deep insight into religion and his spiritual enlightenment coupled with his ceaseless activity and tireless energy were enough to assure his success. But that deep devotion, that intense love for his person, and that zeal and self-sacrifice and enthusiasm for the cause, which he inspired into the hearts of those who associated with him.—these were due to the beauty of his character and to his faultless example. Such was the winsomeness and charm of his ways and such was the sweetness of his disposition that those who came to argue with him became his devoted followers and fast friends. Those who came to vanquish him themselves fell victims before his sincerity and his excellence. And the report spread far and wide in the country that Mirza was a magician, who gave his opponents magic potions to drink, so that those who once went to him never came away. And we little boys in schools heard the stories and wondered ! What was that magic which the Mirza practised ? It was the extreme simplicity of his life, his unfailing courtesy and politeness, his readiness to serve others, and his boundless humility. "His hospitality was the proverbial hospitality of the Orient. If necessary, he would leave his own apartments to lodge a guest. When bidding fare-

well to a friend or a visitor, he would sometimes accompany him on foot even to the distance of two or three miles," so says Muhammad Ali who spent years in his presence and had excellent opportunities of knowing him. Among his disciples he sat like any ordinary man, so that a new-comer could not recognise him from his position. Domestic servants are given to petty dishonesties everywhere alike. When a complaint of this nature came to him, he said that high morals ought not to be expected from persons engaged in menial tasks and one ought not to be hard upon them for their petty delinquencies. Personal affronts never ruffled the equanimity of his temper. In most trying situations he bore himself with patience. The nobility and sublime elevation of his character was reflected in the course of the hearing of that famous case of abetment of murder brought against him by the Christian missionary, Dr. Clark. The Mirza's advocate put a question to a witness of the prosecution, who was one of the most determined enemies of Mirza. The witness was held in high esteem by the public. The question was such that the witness could either reply to it in the negative, which would have very much affected the value of his evidence, or on the affirmative, which would have ruined his reputation and made him an object of universal ridicule. The question had nothing to do with the case, and the lawyer had put it to him in order to break down his obstinacy and to confuse him. But the question was such that no good man would put to another in private life. No sooner did the Promised Messiah hear the question, had he stood up in his place and said, he would not allow that question. This example of his chivalrous generosity to a most determined enemy, who was in that very moment doing

his best to bring him to the gallows, almost smote the heart of the magistrate. The Mirza was fearless in speaking the truth. His devotion to truthfulness was so well-known, that once he was called to give evidence against his own son, the party which called him depending implicitly upon his truthfulness. And he did give the evidence against his son ! One more instance of his truthfulness. The modern postal system was introduced in India only recently, and even to-day, only a small minority of townspeople have any acquaintance with the postal regulations. In the days of Mirza, to the public at large they were a hidden mystery. Mirza once sent a book-packet and enclosed in it a letter as well. People who were always watching for opportunities to bring him to trouble, traced it out and reported it to the authorities. In the proceedings that ensued, his lawyer advised him to deny the whole thing. It was a small matter, and many a person in his place would have accepted the advice. But he loved truth far too well. He refused to deny. He was acquitted. It were these and many other things that had made him dear to the hearts of his disciples. The loftiness of his character, his singleness of mind, his unswerving devotion to the cause of Islam, his utter selflessness, the purity of his life, his humility and simplicity, and his burning passion to see the faith of Muhammad victorious and triumphant in the world and his matchless services in that cause are matters which even his bitterest enemies have always acknowledged. In India, there are to-day no two opinions about it.

VII.

THE SPIRIT OF THE AHMADIA MOVEMENT.

From the brief account given in the foregoing pages

of his life, work and teachings, the reader cannot but have noticed the spirit of broad-mindedness and tolerance that characterised the founder of Ahmadia Movement. Fanaticism, incapacity, or unwillingness to bear with the opinions of others, bigotry and narrow-mindedness are always the offsprings of ignorance. Mere book-learning is no cure for these diseases. Inner enlightenment, a thorough illumination of the mind, can alone uproot these malalties. The average man becomes overwhelmed and bewildered by the masses of detail that religious institutions present, and this bewilderment offers golden opportunities to those who desire to exploit the religious cravings of others to their own benefit. To obtain freedom from this bewilderment and to obtain the mastery over these details is possible only to the man, who has realised and lived in the full light of the truth, who has probed into the ultimate reality of things, and is thus in a position to measure and weigh different institutions and give them their true values with reference to those final principles which his inner enlightenment puts into his hands. This man is then free. He is now his own master. His stature can no longer be measured by conventional standards. He can no more be called orthodox or unorthodox. He has gone beyond that, a mighty genius, towering far above his contemporaries, a message of hope, an encouraging example, a teacher to his fellow-men. Such men are few. Their advent is a rare occurrence. To those rare geniuses Mirza Ghulam Ahmad belonged.

From the great spiritual heights to which these people attain, it is self-evident that they are wholly free from the taint of fanaticism. They are far too enlightened to be narrow-minded. In their own quest for truth,

in the course of their own up-hill fight for light, they learn to know human nature, its weaknesses, its possibilities; they learn to know the multiplicity of human experience and of the men's ways of thought. And this knowledge of theirs enables them to sympathise and bear with all. Thus do they lay the axe at the root of all sectarianism and bigotry. It was in this spirit of toleration and broadmindedness that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad laid the foundations of that community, which later on, just by the mere chance of a decennial census, received the name of Ahmadia Movement. "There is no sect in Islam" is one of his famous utterances: it was furthest from his mind to put up a new sect. Islam is far too big to be bottled into smallisms. This is one of the main planks in the platform of the Ahmadia Movement. For the good cause—the cause of Islam—we are willing and prepared at all times to co-operate with any and every body. Sincerity and an exclusive love for Islam and willingness to make any sacrifice for the cause—these the Ahmadia community demands. For, it should not be forgotten, the main and *only* purpose for which the Ahmadia community came into being is the defence, conservation and propagation of Islam, the carrying of the blessed name and message of Muhammad (may the choicest blessings of Allah be upon him) to the ends of the earth. Islam is the object and toleration the spirit of this Movement.

Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was a free man. He fought for freedom and desired everyone to be free as he was. For tyrannies are killing, all tyrannies, whether they be of worldly rulers or of customs and traditions or of our own follies and ignorance. The dead weight of custom is oppressive to the soul. The blind worship of tradition

is the enemy of all growth. Nations and individuals are alike subject to this law. They can grow and prosper only in a free atmosphere. To the spirit of man freedom is the water of life. Without freedom, there is neither morality nor religion. Tyranny kills the higher man. Hence the stout and unyielding fight for freedom led by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, freedom from the oppression of blind traditionalism.

But the Mirza was no reckless iconoclast. No true reformer ever is. In spite of his repugnance towards traditionalism, he had the profoundest reverence for the former reformers, thinkers, sages and Imams of Islam. This combination of deep reverence towards great men of the past with personal freedom to think out all problems without letting their authority hinder his path may appear to some as self-contradictory. Yet this is the only true scientific method. This is called treading the Middle Path. The Ahmadia Movement is then the inheritor of all the accumulated thought of past ages. No sectarian prejudices are here allowed to stand in the way. Hanfi or Hanbali, Shia or Sunni, Wahabi or Saafai, they are all the same to us. To whichever school of thought an Imam or a reformer belongs, they are all our forefathers, and their products of thought are our rightful inheritance. The products of their thought are entitled to greatest respect, but at the same time their authority is not the binding that we should give up our own freedom of thought. The right of personal judgment is a God-given right, assured to us by the Quran and by the Prophet of God. These Imams were great spiritual lights, but they were not infallible. Besides, they had the conditions of their times before them; they had their own problems. The times are changed, and we are face

to face with wholly different problems. In the meantime this combination of reverence for the teachers of the past, without distinction as to which particular school of thought they belonged, is a distinctive feature of the Ahmadia Movement.

And shall I say something more? I am deeply ashamed to own it, but the undeniable fact is that a section of the followers of this great man, whose life-giving teachings and extraordinary personality we have been discussing, has gone back to what he had been strenuously fighting against all his life. And indeed a step further. For there has been so far no sect in Islam, which has declared the followers of another sect "Kafirs," outside the pale of Islam. This is exactly what the Qadianis have done. Nobody is a Muslim, unless he is a Qadiani! Can one think of a prettier proposition? As if God Almighty cares what badge you wear. The Master demands fruits, He asks for works, and not your little isms. These people have also raised the Reformer into the seat of a prophet. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, who died in 1908, has now become a prophet! The whole notion is so utterly foolish, that I need not waste another word about it. I have already discussed the question at some length in Ch. IV. It is enough to say here that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was wholly innocent of this absurd notion. Freedom of opinion is also not permitted within this new sect, for the Imam does no wrong.

There is fortunately another body of Ahmadis who have been holding fast by the teachings of the master. As soon as they saw that his work was going to be undone, they protested, and finding their protests

unavailing separated, and in accordance with the testament of the founder formed themselves into an organisation, which has been doing excellent work in the cause of Islam. And, indeed, I need not speak of their work at all. I am certain, they need neither my advocacy nor introduction. For their work is by now known to and appreciated by all the world, by friends of movement as well as by those who are not its friends. Shall I speak of world-wide missionary work, the work of reform and defence against the attacks of Islam by other religions in India itself, of its educational activities, or of the immense amount of literature it has brought out on Islam during the few short years, since it came into being? There is the truly epoch-making English translation and commentary of the Holy Quran by the president of this community, Maulana Muhammad Ali, M.A., *Sirat-i-Khair-ul-Bashar*, which has also appeared in English and Turkish. While his Urdu commentary of the Holy Book, and Urdu translation of *Sahih Bukhari*, which is in course of publication, besides a large number of other works in Urdu and English by the same author, are an achievement, of which any community may rightly be proud. Translation of Hindu scriptures has already been undertaken. The Ahmadia Anjuman Ishaat Islam— for this is the name of the organisation— also runs three periodicals, one in English (the *Light*) and one in German (the *Moslemische Revue*). Two high schools, several primary schools, one boarding house, and a missionary college, where students get not only free tuition but very often maintenance as well, are besides. And when we remember that the community is, according to numerical strength, very small, which finds means for all these immense activities, one cannot but wonder at the

great power that faith has, and at the greatness of the man, who could fire up a community with such enthusiasm. The Lord demands fruits, and judged by the fruits, one has to admit, willingly or unwillingly, the greatness of the man who was capable of giving this great impetus.

The last word and for those who might yet be inclined to judge us by the usual sectarian standards. I deem it particularly necessary to clear up one point, for it is so uncommon, and I have been often called upon to explain it. It is this that we regard Mirza Ghulam Ahmad has just what his name implies—Ghulam Ahmad, *i.e.*, the servant of Ahmad which is the other name of our Holy Prophet Muhammad. Indeed, the greatness of the Mirza is to be measured by the service he did to Islam. And the final authority with us in the matter of faith is neither Mirza nor anybody else, but the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet. The right of personal judgment remains to us the same as ever. The Mirza did much for Islam, and we are grateful to him for the impetus he gave to the propagation of Islam—indeed, he revived it after it had lain dead for centuries—and because he tore the veils from off our eyes and enabled us to see the beauties of Islam and the glory of Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be upon him. Islam lay bleeding before he stepped on to the stage. When the champions of Islam were proving helpless before onslaughts of its enemies, he boldly arose and took up the challenge of the age. Alone and single-handed he fought and held the banner of Islam high. He achieved a glorious victory and vanquished beyond recovery of those who thought they had defeated Islam. And, we believe, the work has just begun. The seed he sowed is now sprouting. Besides the work that he personally did, it was no small

achievement of his, that he created a powerful organisation and fired it with unquenchable enthusiasm for the great cause, and in doing this he revived the traditions of the days of the Holy Prophet and of his immediate successors.

We close this booklet with a line of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, which also breathes the spirit with which he was enlivened :

After God, I am drunk with the love of Muhammad,

If this is unbelief, by God! I am the greatest unbeliever.

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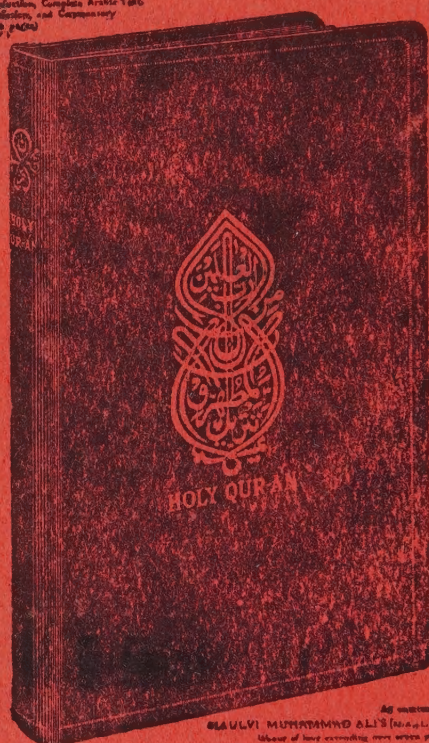
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